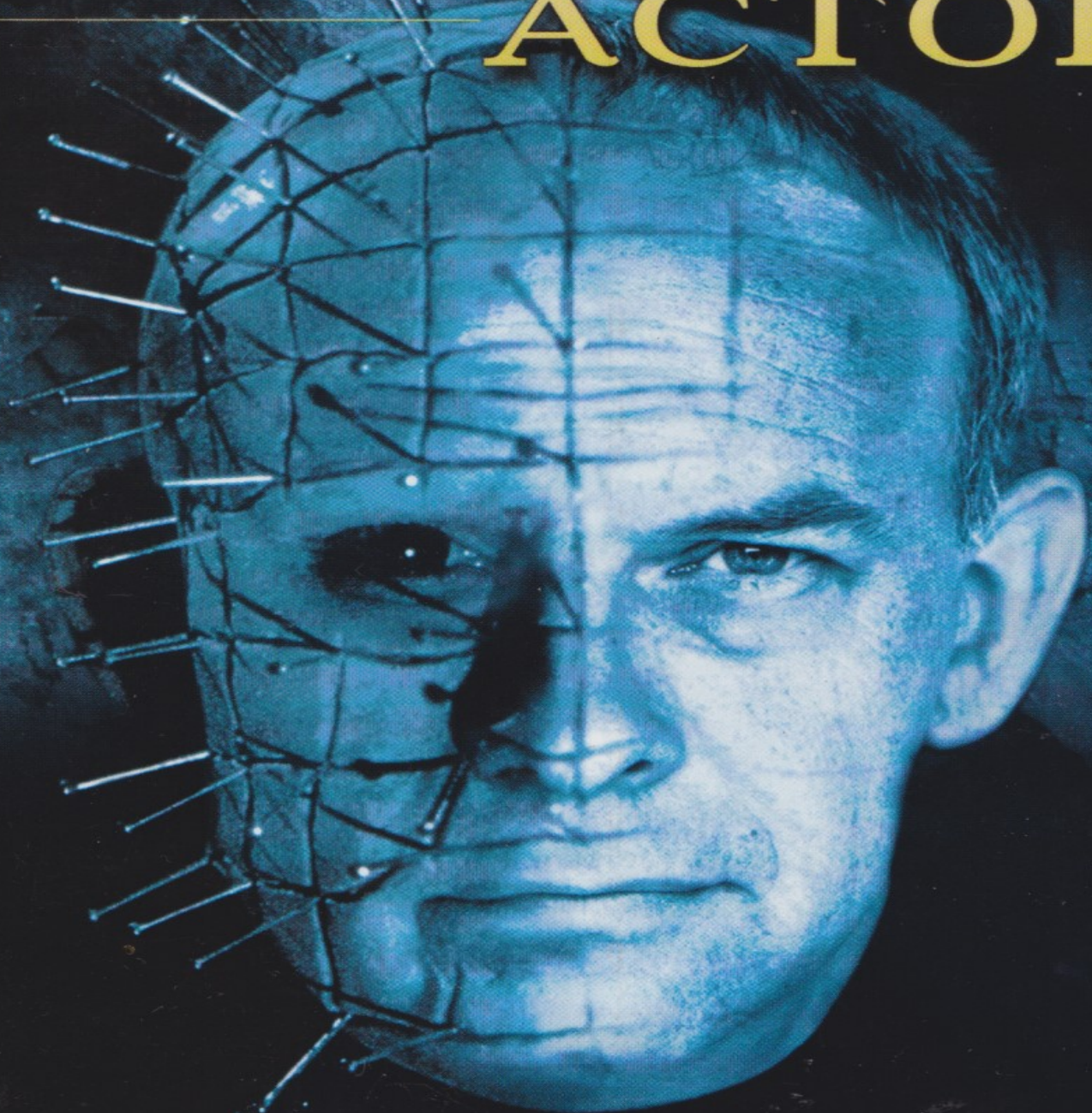


BEHIND THE
MASK OF THE
HORROR
ACTOR



DOUG BRADLEY

FOREWORD BY
CLIVE BARKER

BEHIND THE
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HORROR
ACTOR

DOUG BRADLEY TITAN BOOKS

FOREWORD BY
CLIVE BARKER

Masked actor. Drawing by Clive Barker, 1977.



Foreword

by Clive Barker

n

've known the author of this book many years: youth, man and monster. Our collaborations, first in the theatre and later on film, have produced a number of tales and images of which I am extremely proud. Doug was my Lucifer in *The History of the Devil*, he was my Doctor Frankenstein in *Frankenstein in Love*, and — of course — he was the character I once described as the Patron Saint of Piercing, ol' man Pinhead. That doesn't begin to give you a taste of his skills as an actor, however. He's a fine comedian (great in drag), and a wonderful naturalistic performer. And now — this is a new role for him — he's an author.

Who better to tell the story of the men behind the masks? Doug knows the subject inside out, so to speak. Between these covers you'll find biographies of the great and often troubled souls whose transfigured faces have chilled us on the screen: Chaney, Karloff, Price and the like. You'll find ruminations on the shamanistic roots of the mask-maker's art, and

a glimpse of how these transformations have enriched cultures very different from our own. And woven amongst these details you'll find what to me are the most illuminating passages of all: the confessions of a professional monster.

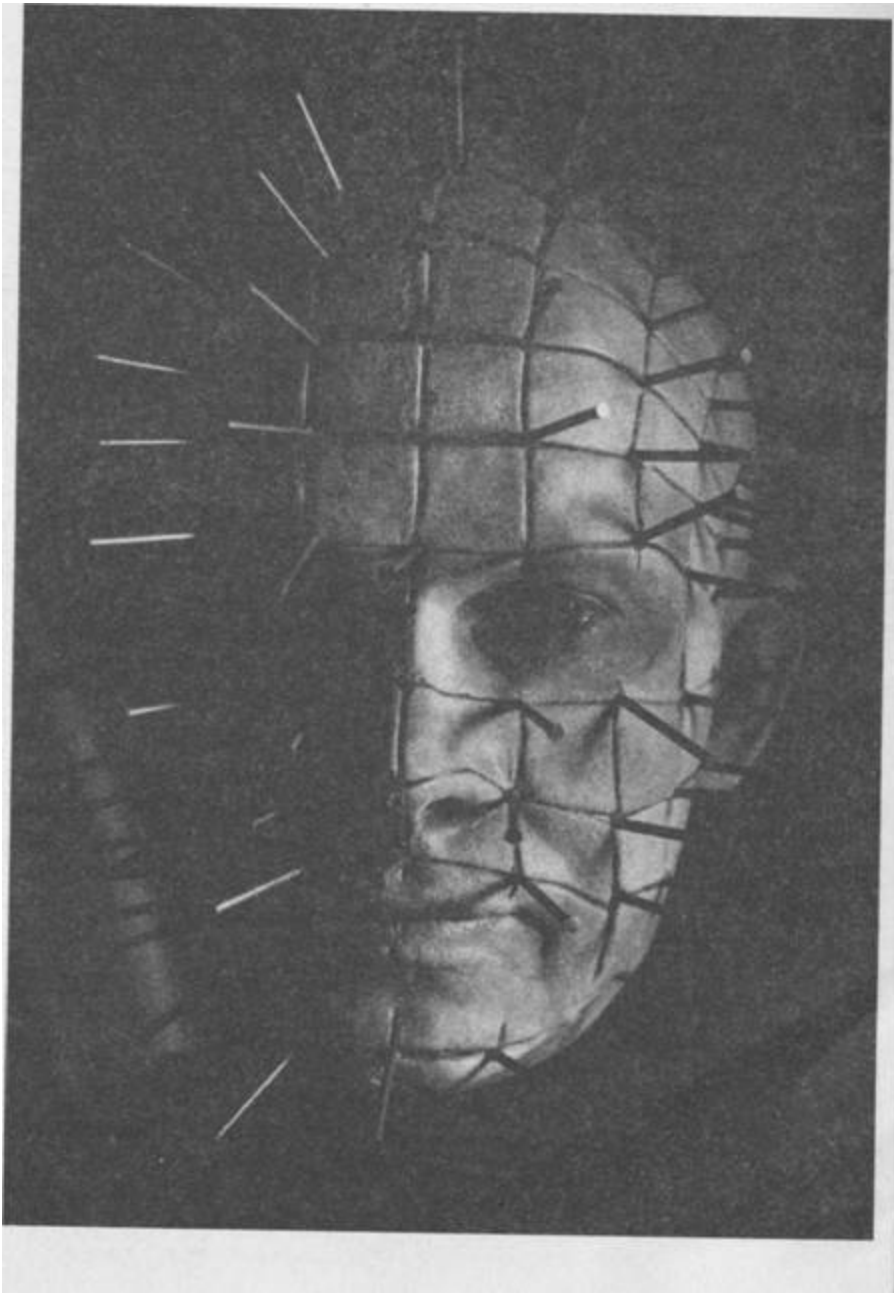
As somebody who has only watched the process from the outside, the method by which an actor *inhabits* his make-up, finding a way to project his characterisation through its layers, remains bewitching to me. Very often the shooting schedule demands an exhausting regime of early calls and late escapes for the men in the masks, yet the best of them (and make no mistake, Mr Bradley is and will be numbered amongst them) find reserves of energy, skill and sheer actorly power to transform a lumpen mass of latex into something mysterious and powerful. The mask is, of course, both a means of concealment and one of confession. It covers the human and reveals the inhuman. The man disappears, and a creature of mythic proportions replaces him: some demon or divinity, a terrible intelligence. There has to be part of the actor that both enjoys and understands the nature of such creatures in order to intimidate us with their presence. When that comprehension is missing, the mask simply sits there, curiously blank. It follows then, that Doug — who is in person a gentleman after the old school, softly spoken and slyly self-deprecating — must have in him *somewhere* an understanding of the great beast he portrays in the *Hellraiser* films. Doug *is* Pinhead, after all. The latex and the costume and the rhetoric aren't worth a damn without him. The arrogance and sadistic glee (it gleams there in the monster's eyes, despite his apparent dispassion), is Doug's gift to the creation, just as surely as the measure of his step or the angle of his head. Without them, the creature would be diminished to a sum of its nails.

Clive
Barker

So, let me leave you in the man's hands, with the observation that he knows more about the subject

Los under discussion than most. He's seen the films,
Angeles he's met the men, he's debated the theories. But
most of all, he's stared in the make-up mirror and seen one
of these sacred monsters staring back at him. Now that's
got to be an experience which marks an actor, however
wise in the ways of the mask he is. And makes, I think, for
some fascinating revelations...

Clive Barker



introduction

O

n 1993, I wrote an illustrated lecture, *The Man in the Mask*, which I have delivered at colleges and universities in England and America, as well as at London's National Film Theatre. The lecture constantly refused to squeeze into the one hour straitjacket I imposed on it and as I kept cutting material out, it occurred to me that it was telling me it wanted to become something different. Like a book, perhaps. I told it not to have ideas above its station, and carried on relentlessly forcing it to be a lecture. It seemed to be reasonably content in that incarnation, since I had enthusiastic responses to it. But I couldn't help noticing that the favourable comments tended to be interspersed with a recurring theme: 'Have you thought about expanding it into a book?' Finally, I could hold out no longer and surrendered. So here we are.

After the release of the first two *Hellraiser* films, I found myself, in interviews, conventions and other situations, the

recipient of a level of curiosity and respect as 'the actor who played Pinhead', which initially surprised me. The journalistic 'hook' has invariably been the same: the 'mild-mannered' family man responsible for playing this sado-masochist Lord of Hell. This may be true, but it's beside the point. If the press could easily pigeon-hole me as a 'hellraiser' or 'wild man', the copy would still write itself and would still be irrelevant. The make-up creates the fascination. The facts are pretty mundane: latex, glue, metal or plastic pins and paint. But the transformation is so

total that the contrast with the human being beneath is absolute.

It is a triumph for pretence: the ultimate achievement of make-believe. Any person who picks up even the simplest mask and places it over their face has instantly become something new. If that person now animates themselves and speaks through the mask, it is no longer him or her that we respond to, but this new character created by the mask. It is almost a shock to see the original face again.

The response of young children to masks is especially magical. As in the universal game of 'peep-bo', where covering your face with your hands is sufficient to make you disappear, their belief is total. The sense of wonderment on their faces — fear and delight in equal part — is extraordinary to see. And even if tears are provoked, it only seems to rouse their interest further and increase their eagerness to get their own hands on the mask and work this magic for themselves.

The universality of masking is clear: it would be hard to find a culture anywhere, in any time or any place, in which the wearing of masks has not played some role, be it religious, magical, dramatic or social. We may not be aware of ourselves as a 'masking' culture, but such images surround us on a daily basis. Whether for protection, intimidation or disguise, we have only to think of the cyclist, the surgeon, the terrorist, the hockey goal-minder or the Ku Klux Klansman to realise how prevalent the mask is. In recent years, Michael Jackson has taken to wearing a veil across the lower half of his face, ostensibly to prevent him ingesting airborne pollution. His chosen material is black silk, however, with the tassels always carefully arranged, indicating a clear self-awareness of the masked image he presents.

Mention of Michael leads inevitably to plastic surgery. This vital surgical tool has now crossed over into the purely cosmetic, allowing us to re-arrange those parts of our natural features which might offend our vanity: to present

a new face to the world. French performance artist Orlan has taken all this to a kind of logical extreme. Surgical theatre has become literal as she 'performs' her operations (nine so far) fully conscious under local anaesthetic, while reading from appropriate texts. This ongoing transformation — she calls it *The Reincarnation of Saint Orlan* — has included the addition of a pair of silicon bumps or 'horns' to her forehead and will reach a conclusion in the year 2000 with the creation of a new nose. No ordinary nose job, though, this artificial proboscis will start from halfway down her brow and finish some inches in front of the tip of the one God gave her. She has been quoted as saying:

'Skin is a mask, a source of strangeness, and by reforming my face, I feel I'm actually taking off a mask.'

The strangeness of the flesh, and the transformation of it, has always been a central motivating idea for the horror film. When I made the decision to be an actor, I had no ambition to work in horror films, despite having been a 'fan' since my teenage years.

In particular, it was those roles in which actors were completely changed by mask or make-up that fired my imagination and became an inspiration to me as I approached playing Pinhead. As I began to research the lives and work of actors such as Lon Chaney, Boris Karloff and Christopher Lee and talked in more detail with my own contemporaries, I was struck by familiarity. I was not alone! The peculiar agonies and ecstasies, privileges and privations of working with these make-ups are, it seems, a universal experience, as I hope these pages will illustrate.

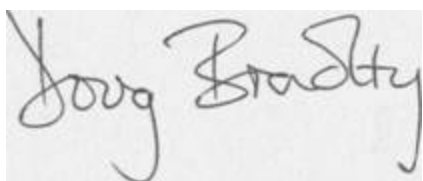
In addition, then, to recounting Pinhead's creation and my experiences playing him, I will also look at the work of these actors, telling the story of the mask from our point of view and comparing their adventures in this magical bywater of acting with my own.

I must acknowledge straight away that I am blurring the distinction between 'mask' and 'make-up'. I am sure that Lon Chaney for one would have been appalled to hear his painstakingly researched and constructed make-ups described as masks. I have used the two terms synonymously to describe a process by which an actor presents a face not his own to the audience.

I should also stress that what follows is entirely a subjective choice. I have not attempted to present in any way a 'definitive' or 'exhaustive' survey. Thus, in discussing the history of the mask, time and space have forced me to be highly selective, and I am conscious of ignoring the rich masking traditions of many cultures: Africa, Oceania, the Ancient Egyptians and Native Americans to name just a few.

Similarly, in the cinema, everyone will have a favourite actor or performance conspicuous by their absence. In the last twenty years in particular, the perfection of techniques for

producing lightweight latex make-up and the arrival of specialist make-up effects artists in abundance confronted me with a vast array of characters and performances to consider. The universality of material, however, means that the story of these make-ups becomes very similar and I have consequently restricted myself to discussing those actors whom I have personally got to know through working with them, either at conventions or in the movies.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Doug Bradley". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

*Doug
Bradley
London*

My thanks are therefore due, for their time and contributions, to Robert England, Gunnar Hansen and Kane Hodder. I am also indebted to numerous people who either helped directly with this book or with the original lecture. I would specifically like to thank Alan Jones, Stephen Jones, Bob Keen, Jean Marais, Kim Newman, Geoff Portass, Tony Timponi, Michael Westmore and Jane Wildgoose. In addition to providing the Foreword here, I would like to thank Clive Barker for his advice and enthusiasm throughout. My wife, Lynne, cast her critical eye over most of this before anyone else and helped me keep on course when I'd lost the compass. Finally, I owe a huge debt of gratitude to everyone at Titan Books, in particular to Adam, Simon and, for his constant support, diverting conversation and downright refusal to panic, my editor, David Barraclough.

Part One

A History of the Mask

Mongol holy man, late nineteenth or early twentieth century.



Chapter One

Mystery Beyond Thought

Palaeolithic Cave Art

o

n 20 July 1914, in the Pyrenees of southern France, the Count Henri Begouen and his three sons set out to visit a cave they had discovered on their land two years earlier. It contained, on a raised dais, the bas-relief of two bison, a bull preparing to mount a cow. Around them were human footprints apparently formed by someone dancing on his or her heels in imitation of animal hoofs.

It was a hot day, and the Count and his sons sat down to rest in the shade of a tree. A peasant came by and suggested they move to a nearby spot where, he said, cool breezes blew from a hole in the ground all year round, whatever the weather. They found the place and began to explore. Tied to a rope, with a miner's lamp to light his way, one of the boys descended into the opening, the first human to do so for perhaps ten thousand years.

After an anxious wait of more than an hour, there was a tug on the rope and he returned to the surface and the twentieth

century, bringing news of the cave's secrets with him.

But the twentieth century now intervened in dramatic fashion. Within a month, the First World War had broken out, so it was not until 1918 that the Cave of Les Trois Frères (the Count named it for his sons) could be properly explored.

What had been discovered was a huge palaeolithic art gallery: an enormous underground chamber, one wall of which is covered with depictions of many hundreds of animals. Some are stunningly realistic representations, while others are no less startling in their impressionistic feel for the creatures. They run and leap and dance across the surface, facing all directions, overlaid one on top of each other. Through them and among them run the lines of what appear to be spears or arrows. Entry wounds are clearly marked, together with pouring fountains of blood. We seem to be looking at a depiction, actual or symbolic, of the hunt upon which these people's lives depended.

But it is not these hundreds of animals which makes Les Trois Frères truly exciting, or which interests me here. Rather it is the presence in the cave of two human beings.

The first appears to be running or dancing with the beasts, his face and body completely covered by the head and skin of an animal, probably a buffalo. From his mouth protrudes what has been variously described as a primitive flute, a bow, or a bull-roarer. It has been suggested that he is putting a spell on the animals or that he is in some way orchestrating the hunt.

In the early 1870s, George Bird Grinnell witnessed this scenario during the great buffalo hunts of the Blackfoot people of Montana:

'The medicine man put on a head-dress made from the

head of a buffalo, and a robe, and then started out to approach the animals. When he had come near to the herd, he moved about until he had attracted the attention of some of the buffalo, and when they began to look at him, he walked slowly away toward the entrance of the chute. Usually, the buffalo followed, and as they did so, he gradually increased his

>1
pace.

The bison were then stampeded into the trap, and those that did not die in the process were easily picked off by the Blackfoot arrows. Is Grinnell describing in nineteenth century North America exactly the process preserved on the walls of Les Trois Freres?

According to Blackfoot legend, the secret of this dance was given by the buffalo themselves, and as they are imitating the animals, this is in a sense true, but I can imagine an equally powerful moment as human learns to become animal.



Bison-headed human figure amongst the animals of Les Trois Freres. In the aftermath of a hunt, surrounded by steaming, bloodied carcasses, the routine of skinning the animals is underway. One individual is suddenly moved by a feeling he has never had before. He stares at the still-bloody skin in his hands which only moments earlier covered the animal's skull and

body. It still seems imbued with the creature's powerful life-force. Perhaps, he thinks, if he clothes himself in the hide, gets under its skin, he will absorb some of those qualities. Slowly, hesitantly, a little frightened no doubt, he pulls on his new skin and drops to all fours. It feels strange but exciting. In his mind's eye he begins to recall, in more detail than he knew he possessed, the animal's movements as it walked or grazed, the tilt of its head as it scanned the horizon. And now he begins to express these memories through his own limbs. A sense of power floods over him: he has become the buffalo.

Now he emerges from behind a rock where he knows a group of his fellow hunters are gathered, and we can imagine their response as an apparently resurrected buffalo rises up and shuffles towards them: anger, laughter, terror and curiosity. With his bull-roarer to mimic the cry of a buffalo, and a little practice, he would be almost indistinguishable from the real thing. Naturally, he would want to put his new-found talent to the test by mingling with the animals themselves.

This new skill would invest him with power: to be perceived by your own people as something more than human, able to inhabit the very soul of the animals, to move among them and return unscathed, apparently able to bend them to your own will. A power important enough, perhaps, to win you pride of place in the centre of the great mural of Les Trois Freres.

I said before that the cave contains the depiction of two human beings. So what of the other? He (She? It?) is at once more powerful and more ambiguous. Set apart from the main body of the fresco, he occupies a natural apse in the rock face fifteen feet above floor level. Portrayed in profile, frozen in mid step of a dance, or in the process of rising from four legs to two (or dropping from two legs to four), his head is turned dramatically towards us to hold our eyes with his own

inscrutable if, to twentieth century eyes at least, slightly comical gaze.

He has been called variously 'The Sorcerer of Trois Freres', 'The Dancing Sorcerer' and 'The Lord of the Animals', and he is also masked and garbed. But here there is no association with one specific creature. Instead, we have a stunning attempt to amalgamate many individual species into one figure: a kind of Universal Animal. But who is he? A sorcerer, a god, a spirit, a hunter or even a self-portrait of the artist have all been suggested.



It might be easiest to assume that it is a representation of a deity except that, in a curious X-ray effect, the artist seems to be at pains to emphasise the human form inside the animal shape, as though wanting you to drop your disbelief as fast as you've suspended it.

I have employed T.S. Eliot's famous description of theatre as 'the willing suspension of disbelief' deliberately because I believe that a powerful and overt theatricality is at work here. Here is a description

by Dr Herbert Kiihn, who visited the cave in the summer of 1926:

'The soft drop of water can be heard... There is no other sound and nothing moves... The silence is eerie...

The 'Sorcerer' of Les Trois Freres.

Then there comes a very low tunnel. We placed our lamp on the ground and pushed it into the hole. The tunnel is not much broader than my shoulders, nor higher. I can hear the others before me groaning... With our arms pressed close to our sides, we wriggle forward on our stomachs, like snakes... I felt as though I were creeping through a coffin. You cannot lift your head; you cannot breathe... And so, yard by yard, one struggles on... Nobody talks... It is terrible to have the roof so close to one's head. And it is very hard: I bump it, time and again. Will this thing never end? Then, suddenly, we are through, and everybody breathes. It is like a redemption.

'The hall in which we are now standing is gigantic. We let the light of the lamps run along the ceiling and walls: a majestic room — and there, finally, are the pictures.'²

'It is like a redemption.' An extraordinary phrase, but that is surely exactly what it was intended to feel like. The sensory deprivation, the pain, the terror ('creeping through a coffin' says Dr Kiihn, but the journey through the birth canal would be just as apt) seem designed to disorientate, to make the surface world seem a very long way away as though you were dying and being reborn into another life.

I wonder what lighting effects they may have stage-managed down there? No electricity or miner's lamps, of course. For the descent to the gallery each individual would presumably have relied on a hand-held naked flame, and if that were extinguished there would be no back-up. You would stumble on in a blackness so intense it would be, in Joseph Campbell's phrase, to be confronted by 'mystery beyond thought.'³ As you emerged from the tunnel would the main gallery already be lit or would there have been some means to illuminate it suddenly from darkness? How those hundreds of animals must have jumped and danced in the flickering light. And was the 'Sorcerer' with them, not just represented on the wall, but there in person moving among the shadows?

Writing about this figure in *The Masks of God*, Joseph Campbell asserts:

'...if [he] is a god, then he is certainly a god of sorcerers, and if a sorcerer, he is one who has donned the costume of a god; and... when the sacred regalia has been assumed the individual has become an epiphany of the divine being itself. He is taboo. He is a conduit of divine power. He does not merely *represent* the god, he is the god; he is a *manifestation* of the god, not a representation.'⁴

Compare this with the following, from Brian Bates' book *The Way of the Actor*.

'All so-called 'primitive' societies have at their head important people with special powers. These people have the ability to transform themselves in public performance from their normal personality into somebody or something else: a god or animal, ancient ancestor or representation of a spirit. Their crucial role in society is to transcend the boundaries of their own identity, follow a path to personal knowledge and, in dramatic performance, lead their audience on ritual journeys into their own psyches. They are mystics, magical seers and creators of visions. These people, commonly called shamans, sorcerers or medicine men, were the first actors.'⁵

Are the figures on the walls of Trois Freres among the first pin-ups of actors? I would say emphatically yes: and in particular they stand remarkably close to the movies and portrayals I will be discussing later in this book. Blood, skin, death, birth and rebirth: aren't these the basic building blocks of horror? How different is the man in the animal skin from, say, Lon Chaney Jnr or Oliver Reed in their Wolf Man make-ups? And doesn't the image of a creature constructed from disparate body-parts remind us of Frankenstein's Monster? And the 'guardian' of a secret, terrifying 'Underworld', who may only be confronted and possibly overcome after some painful or dangerous ordeal, echoes and re-echoes throughout drama and cinema, up to and including Freddy Krueger or Pinhead.

Chapter Two

Shamanism

Sacred Actors

A

anthropologists are unanimous in identifying the figures in the Cave of Les Trois Frères as shamans. And not only in Trois Frères. In the Lascaux caves, sometimes described as 'The Sistine Chapel of the Palaeolithic', a bird-headed shaman lies in some trance-like state next to a slaughtered buffalo; the Tassili rock paintings of the Sahara Desert reveal masked figures which may be four thousand years old while those of the Bushmen in the Drakensburg mountains of South Africa show figures clothed in animal skins and heads. From as far afield as Australia, Sweden, and North America, there are rock carvings or paintings portraying similar figures.

The horned figure of the 'Sorcerer' runs like an obscure but familiar thread throughout history. The cult of the horned god Dionysus was celebrated in the wooded groves around the Acropolis; antler-headed human sculptures have been found in China dating from the fourth century BC; from the

thirteenth century AD in Oklahoma we have a carved wooden mask complete with horns; an eighteenth century engraving shows perhaps the classic image of the shaman, clothed in animal skins, horned and carrying his trademark drum and club; and well into this century, in the English countryside, the Abbots Bromley Horn Dancers performed every September, each dancer carrying a full set of reindeer antlers. Christianity, unable either to assimilate this figure or expunge it from the popular imagination, cast it out and demonised it as the goat-headed, horned figure of the Devil.



Eighteenth century engraving of a Siberian shaman.

Shamanism survived astonishingly intact into the present century, so that we have remarkable first-person and eye-witness accounts of their dress and performances'. The shaman was not a priest, teaching the people a set of truths, rather they depended on self-knowledge and revelation. You became a shaman usually as the result of some psychic disturbance, which might have occurred spontaneously or might have been brought on by some life-event; perhaps you had a particularly vivid dream-life, or an ability to interpret the dreams of others; you might undergo an initiation ceremony which would involve many days of isolation, starvation and deprivation. The Yakut

of Siberia believe that shamans are hatched in nests in a giant larch tree out of eggs laid by the 'Mother of Animals', a great she-eagle with feathers of iron, and reared by a spirit shaman-ess with one eye, one hand and one leg.

Shamans were actors, dancers, singers, poets and storytellers, healers, weathermen, fortune tellers and mystics. Crucially, they were believed to have the power to leave the earth and 'fly' up to meet the gods (hence the importance of feathers in shamanistic costumes) and descend into the underworld to commune with the spirits of dead ancestors. They were also able to transform from human form by entering the spirit of an animal or of the elements. They seem to have lived an uneasy, arm's length existence on the fringes of society, revered and needed but also feared and shunned.

Let me reassure you that I am not setting out here to depict

all acting as a mystical process, any more than I would suggest that all shamans are merely showmen. But consider this statement:



Mask carved from cedar wood. The eyes and mouth are inlaid shells. Oklahoma, c1200 AD.

I was obliged almost without ceasing to utter cries, weep, sing, dance and roll upon the ground where I went into horrible contortions; I was forced to jerk my head and feet in all directions, howl like a bear...

[but] I am never absent, I always know what I am doing or saying."

It could be an actor describing some weird piece of experimental theatre: it is in fact a shaman describing a moment of 'spirit possession'.

In all the accounts of the shamans performances, I am struck by the overt theatricality employed. Let us now enter the shaman's tent, or *yurt*, and witness a seance designed to drive out an illness. This account was recorded by Wenceslas Sieroszewski among the Yakut of northern Asia at the turn of the century:

'A white mare's hide is spread in the middle of the *yurt*. The shaman drinks cold water and genuflects to the four cardinal points, spitting water to right and left. Silence reigns in the *yurt*. The shaman's assistant throws some horsehair on the fire, then covers it completely with ashes. The darkness now becomes total. The shaman sits down on the mare's hide and dreams... Suddenly a succession of shrill cries, piercing as the screech of steel, sounds from no one knows where; then all is silent again... Now from above... below... before... behind the shaman rise mysterious sounds: nervous, terrifying yawns, hysterical hiccups... it is the shaman making these sounds...

'Suddenly, he stops; again silence reigns, except for a faint humming like that of a mosquito. The shaman begins to beat his drum. He murmurs a song. The song and the drumming rise in crescendo... then stop abruptly, so that again nothing is heard but the hum of mosquitoes...

'The shaman then invokes the help of his familiar spirits... Sometimes they arrive so suddenly and violently that the shaman falls over backwards... On the arrival of the [spirits, he] begins leaping, makes swift, violent gestures... The fire is rekindled... He flings himself into the air... He cries out wildly... Finally he goes to the

patient and summons the cause of the illness to depart or he lays hold of the trouble, carries it to the middle of the room and... chases it away, spits it from his mouth, kicks it, drives it with his hands and breath.'²

To complete the process, the shaman may accompany the soul of a sacrificed animal to the sky, sometimes appearing to remove the animal's heart with his hands, daubing his face and costume with blood. Having completed his ecstatic journey', he may ask for his body to be purified by having his flesh seared with burning coals.

What we are witnessing, it seems to me, is symbolic theatre of the most powerful, primal kind. The changes of light, music and sound; periods of intense activity followed by moments of stillness and silence — all fundamental theatrical rules. In other accounts, even simpler kinds of play-acting are involved, with the shaman's descent into the underworld marked by no more complicated a metaphor than climbing under a blanket! As in Sieroszewski's account, ventriloquism and voice-throwing are widely recorded, as is basic sleight of hand and other tricks of the magician's trade. There is even a tradition of that old theatrical stock-in-trade, drag! Among the Chukchee, these shamans are known as *sofit men*' and sound like transsexuals, sometimes even marrying a male member of the tribe. More commonly, like a 'drag queen' they put on female clothes for performance only. It is also worth noting that while shamanism is predominantly a male preserve, it is not exclusively so and there are widespread accounts of women shamans.

The wearing of masks is by no means universal among shamans. The Chukchee seem to have used them specifically to frighten children! They were sometimes worn at funerals to prevent the souls of the dead recognising the shaman in future encounters. Painting the face or daubing it with animal fat was also common. It has been suggested that the shamans entire costume might be considered to be a mask.

I have attempted to trace some continuity from the figures in the Cave of Les Trois Frères to the twentieth century and explore the common ground between acting and shamanising. It seems that that linkage extends to cinema as well.

In *Money Into Light*, director John Boorman's diary account of the making of *The Emerald Forest*, he describes travelling into the rain-forests of Brazil to meet with Takuma, a renowned shaman or, in his language, *paje*. Boorman set about trying to describe his project to Takuma: . 'It is not easy to describe a movie to a man who has never seen one or watched television. I struggled, and he listened intently. I told him how one scene would stop and another begin in a different place and time, as it does in a dream. He lit up, grasping that. I told him of some of the tricks and wonders we got up to. Finally, he was satisfied. "You make visions, magic. You are a *paje* like me."³

Chapter Three



It is generally agreed that drama in its earliest forms grew out of religious ritual, but it is difficult to establish exactly when the one became the other. Indeed, the word 'religious' is probably misleading in this context since there was little or no distinction between the sacred and the profane in the pre-Christian world. If we are going to look anywhere, it might be to the sanctuary of the horned god Dionysus on the southern slopes of the Acropolis in Athens.

Greek and Roman Theatre

Here, somewhere around the fifth or sixth centuries BC flowered the great tradition of Greek tragic theatre, known to us through the work of playwrights such as Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides. An amphitheatre was built and the great feast days associated with the god became theatrical festivals. In her *History of Greek and Roman Theatre*, Margarete Bieber suggests that the cult of Dionysus lent itself especially to development into dramatic form because it had myths rather than merely ritual and liturgy. His life-story (which may sound vaguely familiar), with its miraculous birth, fights against the Titans, suffering, death and rebirth, was fertile ground for dramatisation. She also emphasises that this was an ecstatic cult. The Greek word *ekstasis* means 'to stand outside oneself', which might serve as a good basic definition of acting.

According to Greek legend, it was Thespis, the first actor (who gave his name to all 'thespians'), who invented the mask. In his tragic performances, he painted his face white — a practice still adopted in the classical mime tradition popularised in this century by Marcel Marceau. This later became formalised into the wearing of masks to denote the different characters. Thespis toured around the villages of

Attica performing semi- improvised plays in which he was the only actor.

No actors masks have survived from this period, probably because they were constructed from degradable materials like wood, leather and linen. The masks which have survived are made of stone, terracotta or marble and may be copies of dramatic masks or templates for their construction. Being the most important part of an actor's costume, the mask was always dedicated at the sanctuary of Dionysus before use.

In early Greek theatre it is clear that the emphasis was on the text and the performance as a whole rather than on the actor as an individual, so perhaps the wearing of masks was deliberately intended to serve this function, deflecting the spectator's attention away from the mundane reality of an actor speaking lines towards the world of gods, kings and heroes being portrayed. The Greeks employed the same word for mask' and 'face': *teprosopon*, literally 'that which is set before the eye'.

Greek actors were by no means anonymous, however. A separate contest for their skills was introduced as early as 449 BC. Thus we may name Neoptolemus and Thettalus as among the first recorded winners in the 'Best Actor' category! We also have an account of what sounds like early Method acting. In Sophocles' *Elektra*, for the scene in which Elektra mourns the supposed death of her brother Orestes, the actor Polus reputedly carried an urn containing the ashes of his dead son on stage with him. Another actor, Theodorus, became renowned for subdy altering plays to suit his particular talents, and this became so widespread that 'official' texts were deposited in the archives. Failure to conform to these resulted in actors being fined, and Alexander the Great himself is recorded as paying one such penalty on behalf of a favourite actor named Lycon.

By the third century BC, actors had organised themselves into a guild, the 'Artists of Dionysus', reflecting their quasi-

religious standing. They were exempt from military service and (something present-day legislators would do well to consider) the paying of taxes. Allowed unlimited freedom of movement, they were used as diplomatic messengers and sometimes as secret agents.

What we know of the Greek theatrical mask is derived entirely from vase paintings. Ian Jenkins, Assistant Keeper in the Department of Greek and Roman antiquities in the British Museum, says that this evidence:

'... suggests that the mask covered more than just the face, being put on over the head like a helmet. The facial type... tended to present a somewhat blank expression, enlivened only by the gaping mouth through which the actor's voice had to be projected. These masks represented the general type of the character portrayed: beardless youth, bearded citizen, king, woman, god. In this, theatre masks conformed with the convention of Greek sculpture and painting where... the portrayal of individual personality was eschewed in favour of idealised form... The mask determined the basic persona of the [character] which [the actor] would expand through the action and narrative of the play."

Purely practical considerations may also have dictated the form and nature of the mask. Greek amphitheatres were built on a fairly vast scale, and while their famed acoustics allowed the voice to travel with extraordinary clarity to all parts of the auditorium, the spectators were seated at some considerable distance from the stage, and the mask may have tended to stereotype simply to signal as quickly as possible who this character was. In Athenian comic drama, it became fashionable to create caricature masks of well-known public figures for the further amusement of the audience.

English theatre director Peter Hall senses a more profound dramatic unity in the use of the mask in Greek tragedy. In 1981

Backstage at a Greek satyr play showing actors carrying their masks. Reclining on the couch are Dionysus and Ariadne. The figures in costume are the solo actors, as distinct from the chorus members with their furry loin-cloths and phalluses.
Athenian wine-mixing bowl, c400 BC.



he mounted an authentic' masked production of Aeschylus' *The Oresteia* at the National Theatre in London and subsequently at the Greek amphitheatre at Epidauros. In his autobiography he records:

'The Greek stage is in itself a mask: hideous murders and violence happen behind the scenes; the terror is imagined... The mask, properly used, does not obscure but reveal. In tragedy, it makes possible the expression of hysterical emotions which would be disturbing and unacceptable with the naked face... I soon realised that, for me, the Greek plays are impossible without the mask.'²

Hall's experiences may also reveal something of the technical demands of these masks, since his actors initially found speaking difficult, managing only 'grunts and gibberish'³ before slowly building up to words.

As time went by, the masks began to develop more animated expressions, reflected by increasing naturalism in portrait style. It was probably also the increasing prominence of actors as individuals which led to the gradual displacement of the mask. Actors began to 'take their bow' as themselves, carrying their character mask(s) in their hands. The new dramatic form of mime (not mime as we understand it, it was still spoken) dispensed with

masks altogether and was also responsible for bringing women onto the stage for the first time.

Probably as a consequence of the peripatetic activities of the Artists of Dionysus, the traditions of Greek theatre reached the Roman world.

Like its Greek counterpart, Roman theatre was almost universally masked and the style of masks changed little, although the types and varieties continued to proliferate. The Latin word for mask, *persona*, gives us our words 'person' and 'personality', and has passed directly into the language through

the work of analytical psychologist Carl Gustav Jung. He used it to denote a mental rather than physical disguise: that aspect of ourselves which we choose to present to the world. Originally, however, it meant only 'character' as in *dramatis personae*, the characters in the play.

Roman theatre absorbed more of the comic tradition from Greece, usually turning on sexual intrigue, and swindles and deceptions of all kinds. Tragedy seems to have moved closer to melodrama, losing the poetic qualities of the Greeks.

Actors led more secular lives, and fame and fortune could be found by the successful. Among the Roman 'celebrities' was Roscius Gallus whose career spanned thirty years. He is said to have performed without a mask for some parts to make comic use of his natural squint, and he is also credited with personally training Panurgus, the first slave to appear on stage.



Roman theatre reached its peak around the second and first centuries BC. Thereafter, popular taste began to favour rustic farce and mime. Pantomime (masked acting and dancing in dumb show) began to develop while the animal and gladiatorial combats were also increasing in popularity. Indeed, Cicero drew a distinction between plays (to be read) and theatre

Marble relief of Roman actor's mask. First or second century

AD.

(stage performance of all kinds).

By the third and fourth centuries AD, theatre and its masks faced a new enemy. Christianity had become the official religion of the Empire and was implacably opposed to theatre, doubtless because of its pagan roots. Christians were forbidden to become actors on pain of excommunication. Performances on Sundays were outlawed and in the sixth century the theatres were closed altogether. Only the eastern outpost of Constantinople withstood the onslaught according to legend, because the Empress Theodora had herself once been an actress. State-organised, public theatre survived for another hundred years or so, only to perish at the hands of another religion, Islam, following the Saracen invasions of the seventh and eighth centuries.

Liturgical Drama

While it was engaged in proscribing public theatre performance, Christianity was simultaneously attempting to absorb pagan drama into its own ritual. Liturgical drama, as it is known, began as simple dramatisations as part of the Mass, especially at Easter. Given the dramatic and mystical nature of the ceremony and the parallels between the 'lives' of Dionysus and Christ (miraculous birth, death and resurrection), this must have been an almost inevitable process, and a sensible one for a nascent state religion eager for converts.

This grew into the separate *ludus* or play often performed in front of the church and developed into the Miracle or Mystery plays. The masking tradition survived here, and it has been suggested that the golden masks worn by the actors playing God were modelled on those previously used for Apollo, the sun god. Perhaps because of this, the Church got itself in a froth again and withdrew support from the drama it had helped to create.

Theatre and the European masked tradition went underground. For several hundred years, we have only accounts of itinerant entertainers: mimes, court jesters, acrobats, jugglers, balladeers and minstrels. Organised theatre would have to wait for the explosion of the Renaissance to re-assert itself.

Japanese Masked Drama

The Japanese masked tradition is an ancient one: the first known masks may be as much as ten thousand years old. The earliest performances were shamanistic dances of the Shinto religion intended to guarantee a successful rice harvest, and are still performed at shrines today.

The masks of *Gigaku*, a Buddhist dance/performance, were carved from a single piece of wood, usually camphor. Like the Greek masks, they were helmet-like and fitted over the whole head. Painted in flesh colours, they had real hair stuck to the crown.

An account written in 1233 describes these masks being carried around the temple courtyard to musical accompaniment. A masked character called Chido led the way, sweeping the route clean, followed by a *shishi* who sounds a lot like the familiar Chinese dragon: a lion mask attached to a length of material and operated by two people. Following this, a play would be performed with all the actors masked. Characters from *Gigaku* influenced later masked theatre, while the *shishimai*, or lion dance, is still found in religious and popular festivals today.

Bugaku, which dates from the seventh century, has always been regarded as the dance of the Court, and public performances can still be seen at the Imperial Palace in Tokyo. The masks were smaller and lighter and included a remarkable inno

vation. A separate, hinged chin-piece allowed the performer to animate the mask by moving his own mouth. The example shown has been carved from cypress wood and then lacquered and gilded. The beard and moustache are real hair. The chin

piece hangs on silk cords which also attach to the eyes, allowing them to move in unison with the mouth.

No, the most famous masked theatre of Japan, flowered in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries under the patronage of a *Shogun* who was a convert to Zen Buddhism. Consequently, *No* developed as an austere art form 'based on the Zen principles of restraint, understatement, economy of movement and frugality of expression.'⁴

As one would expect, the actor's preparations were long, careful and ritualistic, with the mask at the centre: 'The masks of *No* are generally neutral in expression, and it is the skill of the actor which brings the mask to

*Bugaku mask depicting the
Dragon King.*

life... The masks themselves are small and only cover the front of the face. After donning his sumptuous costume the actor seats himself before a mirror and studies the mask... [It] is then tied onto his head, any wig or necessary headgear is put on and he stands before a full-length mirror, letting the mask take over his own personality before he is led to the stage.

'No masks are... carved from a single piece of Japanese cypress wood... then holes are cut for the nose, eyes and mouth. The mask is coated with layers of gesso, mixed with glue [and] painted in the prescribed colours for that character. Parts of the mask may be gilded, areas may be highlighted to increase the three dimensional effect, and some have inlaid, metallic eyes. The hair and outline of the eyes are usually finished in black ink.'^s

Like the other forms of classic Japanese drama, including *Kabuki* and the extraordinary puppets of the *Bunraku*, *No* is still performed today. This continuity of tradition in Japan is in striking contrast to the West, where the chain has been constantly broken by the rise and fall of empires and the religious upheavals already described.

*An actor in the No theatre of
Japan prepares for a performance.*

Com media dell'arte

As *No* was emerging in Japan, a new masked theatre was developing in Italy, being first recorded in 1545 and flourishing up to the eighteenth century. *Dell'arte* means roughly of the profession' and was probably intended to indicate that these were not itinerant performers but trained, professional actors. It is also sometimes called the *commedia delle maschere* because the actors were almost always masked.

The masks were half-masks, or cat-masks as they are sometimes called. Made of leather and cloth, they covered the head and the upper half of the face ending in a line below the nose and across the cheeks. They were sharply defined character masks, and the best indication we have of their appearance comes from the exquisite drawings of Jacques Callot.

It is clear that they inherited the traditions of Greek and Roman comedy and probably also represented a formalisation of the clowning which had marked court life and carnivals in the intervening centuries.

Several separate companies can be identified by the late sixteenth century, with one unusually led by a woman, Diana da Ponti. The smaller, poorer companies travelled around and would simply perform where they stopped. Others had portable backdrops and scenery and the most affluent had their patrons' private theatres at their disposal. One troupe is known to have played at the court of Elizabeth the First in England in 1601.

The drama was entirely improvised, with actors specialising in one particular role, each with his or her own character masks. Literally hundreds of basic scenarios existed, but the drama generally centred around the attempts of a pair of young lovers (usually played without masks) to unite in the face of stern opposition from a variety of authority figures. The mainspring

of the comedy was provided by the *zanni* or servants and their attempts to help or hinder the lovers. *Zanni* is only a dialect diminutive of *Giovanni* (John) which became the generic name for these characters. A process of Chinese (or English) whispers turned this into 'zanies', a term still in use today.

These characters were marked by an eye for the main chance, limitless comic invention and complete disregard for authority or social mores. By contrast, a few were defined by absolute stupidity and an inability to do anything right. Out of a vast array of characters, the most successful remain universally known today: *Arlecchino* (Harlequin), *Colombina* (Columbine), *Pedrolino* (Pierrot), *Pulcinella* (Punch) and *Scara-mticia* (Scaramouche).

Their influence on comedy continues to be felt well into the twentieth century. *Burla*, the name for their comic routines, gives us 'burlesque' and 'slap-stick comedy' derives from the flat sticks which would be slapped together off-stage when blows were exchanged or characters fell down. Circus clowns, the Keystone Cops, the Marx Brothers, the Three Stooges, Jerry Lewis, Bugs and Daffy and Tom and Jerry all owe a huge debt to this rich, anarchic comic theatre.

The Mummers

The Mummer plays are most closely identified with England but are familiar throughout Europe, with variants turning up in the Balkans, Eastern Europe and Greece, while the name itself is thought to derive from the Dutch *momme* or Danish *mumme*, which means 'to disguise oneself with a mask'. The presence of these plays in Greece is especially interesting, since it has been suggested that their structure displays similarities with classical Greek drama, while there are also echoes of Dionysian ritual in that all the gathered fragments (and there are hundreds) contain a death and resurrection.

To contemporary eyes, these popular folk dramas may appear deceptively quaint or simplistic. They generally depict a confrontation between the 'goody' — usually St (sometimes King) George — and a 'baddy'. The bad guy most often goes by the odd name of the Turkey Snipe which is probably a corruption of the Turkish Knight, a name acquired at the time of the Crusades. In fact, names, stories and dialogue were never written, but handed down verbally from one generation to the next, so the scope for such changes to set in was always considerable.

The uniformity of the basic stories is remarkable, however, always dramatising the battle between the forces of light and darkness, with light always the victor. Not surprisingly, therefore, they were usually performed at the winter solstice (Yuletide or Christmas). They have been described as: 'authentic survivals of age-old dramas... [belonging] to a pre-Christian and very likely to a pre-Celtic epoch. Their very survival over the centuries seems miraculous.'⁶

The plays even seem to echo shamanistic ritual. There is always a point in the drama at which the powers of goodness or light appear to be defeated. It is only through the intervention of a shamanesque healer with magical powers that death is vanquished, the hero brought back to life, and light and warmth restored to the world.

The masking of the performers takes a variety of forms, and it has been suggested that the emphasis is on disguise, the important point being that the performers should not be recognised by the spectators. In the Middle Ages, animal masks were often worn, but any number of bizarre head-dresses have been employed.

Frequently, these are tall pointed hats with strips of cloth or paper falling over the face, which would be blacked out. In the case of the Marshfield Paper Boys in England, these strips have latterly been made from nothing more exotic than newspaper, which continues to fall in strips all the way down the body to the feet.

I have said that the Mummers most often performed their plays at the winter solstice, and across Europe, masked revellers appear at some significant moment in the natural calendar. These masquerades tend to centre around young, single males crossing from puberty into adulthood, their state of transition often further emphasised by sexual ambiguity in their masks and costumes.

The Masquerades occur mostly at Carnival, ending on Mardi Gras or Shrove Tuesday — the final day of abandon before the fasting and general strictures of Lent — and invariably marked by violence, sexual licentiousness and religious intolerance. In Rome, the Jews were forced to pay for the Mardi Gras feast, while the practice of burning and exploding a giant head of the Prophet Mohammed in southern Spain was only discontinued in the 1960s. More often, the role of scapegoat would be taken by a masked figure representing the spirit of Carnival itself and which would be paraded through the streets and 'executed' or burned.

The next most significant calendrical event was what we now know as Hallowe'en. The Celtic New Year, Samhain, fell on the first of November. The last day of October was traditionally the last day of the harvest. It was a time of intense activity all round. The ewes would be mated for lambing next spring, and the rest of the animals would be brought in from their summer pastures to be overwintered or slaughtered. Not for nothing was November known in the Saxon calendar as *Bleodmonath* or 'blood month'.

Samhain also marked the transition from summer to winter, from light, warmth and life into darkness, cold and death. For this reason, the Celts believed that (like its counterpart Beltane on the first of May) it was a potent time as the hinge between the two halves of the year. They believed that the veil between the material and spiritual worlds became very thin; their gods were very close to them, but so were evil spirits which, unless placated, might

gain ascendancy. More significantly, perhaps, the dead were also free to roam at will and visit their former homes.

Medieval attempts to Christianise the festival as the Feast of All Saints and All Souls largely failed and tended only to emphasise its role as a festival of the dead, in which it shares so much with the Mexican Day of the Dead:

'In Italy, Spain and other areas of southern Europe, the dining room was readied with a proper reception for the returning dead. A sacrificial gift or feast was given away in exchange for the dead happily returning to their abodes underground, from where they would enable the growth of the crops in the forthcoming season. Elsewhere in Europe, especially in Britain, the same effect was achieved by similar means. Here, the children acted as the representatives of the dead ancestors.

'[They] went around disguised as frightening monsters or witches, occasionally wearing skull-masks and collecting offerings: the choice was to give and live, or refuse and die. Giving to the children meant settling the score with the ancestors, honouring and satisfying them and sending them safely back to their realm.'⁷

The practice of travelling from house to house as part of Hallowe'en is not something I remember from my childhood. But in the United States, of course, 'Trick or Treat' has always been a central part of what is rapidly becoming a major festival. So familiar has it become that it has now been re-exported back to England, and I for one feel that my Hallowe'en is incomplete unless I have a ragged little band of ghosts and skeletons appear on my doorstep.

Nor was this practice confined to Europe. In *The Golden Bough*, J.G. Frazer reports that the Iroquois and Hurons celebrated their New Year with a 'festival of dreams':

'Men and women, variously disguised, went from wigwam to wigwam, smashing and throwing down whatever they came across. It was a time of general license; the people were supposed to be out of their senses, and therefore not

responsible for what they did... The only way to escape these persecutors was to guess what they dreamed of. On one day of the festival the ceremony of driving away evil spirits from the village took place. Men clothed in the skins of wild beasts, their faces covered with hideous masks, and their hands with the shell of the tortoise, went from hut to hut making frightful noises.'⁸

We seem to be back among the shamans. And where better than Hallowe'en — when the night belongs to all things ghoulish — to make our next transition. For if the mask has largely disappeared from the theatre in our own century, there is no doubt that it has found its natural home in the cinema, and particularly in horror and fantasy films. Let us also remember that description of entering the Cave of Les Trois Freres: the transition from daylight to a place of darkness and magic, from reality to an invented world of dreams. Doesn't it sound like a description of passing from the street into a theatre or cinema? We have seen how masked drama was born in the *odeons* or theatres of Ancient Greece. And in our modern Odeons, our picture palaces, we find the gods and demons, the monsters and angels of our own times.

So... Let's go to the movies...

Part Two

The Silent Era

Lon Chaney's make-up box and a few of his 'Thousand Faces'.



Chapter Four

Supporting Features German Expressionism and Cecil Holland

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ocating the identity of the first actor to wear a mask in the movies would be an obsessive's game in which I don't propose to participate.

If we were looking for starting points, we might go all the way back to Georges Melies' work (*A Trip to the Moon; The Merry Frolics of Satan* etc). We might wish to point to the delightfully named Charles Ogle who became the first actor to play Frankenstein's Monster on screen in the 1910 Edison Company one-reeler. An extremely hairy vision of the Monster, his make-up amounts to little more than whiting out his face. Percy Darrell Standing also played the Monster in the *1915 Life without Soul*, but no print of this film is known to exist. The same fate befell the 1920 Italian film *Il Mostro Di Frankenstein* in which Umberto Guarracino played Il Mostro while the film's producer

played Frankenstein. A not inappropriate role for a producer, you might feel.

Before looking at Hollywood's silent era, mention must be

made of the extraordinary films of the German Expressionist cinema. Robert Wiene's 1919 classic, *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*, has been much copied, even remade (badly, in 1962), but never equalled. James Whale used it as a stylistic model for *Frankenstein* in 1931. Fritz Lang's *Metropolis* gave us the evilly glittering robot Maria, one of the most familiar images in all of cinema, and used by George Lucas as the basis for C-3PO in *Star Wars* fifty years later.



For many people, myself included, the horror movie begins with F. W. Murnau's *Nosferatu*, made in 1922 (the film originally carried the subtitle *A Symphony of Horrors*). The emaciated face of the vampire, so different from that of Max Schreck, the actor who played him, is an image that still haunts today. I have been unable to discover any detail of the make-up's design and application or of Schreck's experiences playing the part. In her biography of Murnau, Lotte H. Eisner acknowledges 'a tragically ambiguous character' but otherwise only comments rather tersely that Schreck was 'a

Max Schreck as Count Orlok in Nosferatu.

normally undistinguished actor.'²

I should also mention Paul Wegener's three outings as the Golem, a figure from Jewish legend which, as a clay figure brought to life by its creator, has obvious associations with Frankenstein's Monster. As well as playing the Golem, Wegener was also involved in the writing and directing of all three films, the best of which is the 1920 version *The Golem*. Again, details of the make-up are hard to come by, but it appears to be some kind of solid (rubber?) wig with Wegener's face painted to match.

I had assumed that my real starting point here would be Lon Chaney, but while researching for this book I came across Cecil Holland, a name of which I confess to having been ignorant. Not only was he known as 'The Father of the Make-up Profession', but is also credited with being the first 'Man of a Thousand Faces' and of having given that title to Chaney. I can't verify this (the description seems to have first been used in relation to Lon by the Universal publicity machine at the time of the 1922 film *The Trap*), but it would certainly not be inappropriate since Holland might almost be considered as a prototype for Lon. The two men certainly knew and admired each other. Holland appeared in Chaney's 1926 movie *The Blackbird* and when Holland published *The Art of Make-up for Stage and Screen* in the following year, Lon provided the preface in which he wrote:

'Cecil Holland's book... is crammed with practical hints on the *modus operandi* of make-up, and describes carefully the study of the face necessary to make a given disguise convincing. Mr Holland is an expert in the reproduction of cuts, scars, and other forms of illusions. I have long watched his work in the studios with interest... Of course, make-up is a hobby with me, hence perhaps I was more interested than anyone else in Hollands work.'³

Holland was born in England and after false starts as a sailor and farm labourer, wound up in the United States. In

a process which will become not unfamiliar to us, he started his acting career playing small roles in touring stock companies where he began to learn the art of make-up. When his company holed up in Los Angeles in 1913 he began eking out his meagre wage by taking movie work with the Selig Company. He seems to have abandoned the stage pretty quickly and soon established himself as a character actor in films.

In 1915, he played Death in *The Man with the Iron Heart* for which he designed and applied his own make-up, attempting to recreate the appearance of a skull. The make-up took about three hours to apply:

'He purchased false teeth and set them onto strips of hard rubber, attaching them to his face with wires and hooking them over his ears. He covered his hair with a silk stocking, and then used about a pound of nose putty to model the appearance of a skull onto his face. The nose putty also served to cover the wires and further secure the false teeth.'⁴

The tooth arrangement was not good for gourmet diners: he had to survive on a solution of milk and eggs during filming days. In 1916, speaking of himself as a character actor he said: 'I have played hundreds of different parts, and I speak the truth when I say that I never made up two just alike. A movie character man is least known to the public, for each picture you see him in a different character but do not recognise him, and unless his character and name appear on the screen, you would never know him. At times, I have not been recognised even by people in the company. That to me is a great compliment, for then I know I am entirely away from myself.'⁵

I have frequently been asked whether remaining largely anonymous as myself while Pinhead became a kind of sub-cultural icon annoyed me, and I have usually described it as a double-edged sword. Certainly I did not initially feel complimented when members of the crew, guys I'd chatted and joked with for the last several weeks, completely ignored me at the *Hellraiser* 'wrap party' (the celebratory bash at the conclusion of shooting a film). It took a while for it to dawn on me that I hadn't upset them, they just didn't know who I was, having never seen me out of make-up.

In 1925, Holland created an extraordinary ape makeup for actor Bull Montana in *The Lost World*, apparently out of cotton wool. Two years later he became MGM's head of make-up and relinquished his acting career. He created Boris Karloff's make-up for *The Mask of Fu Manchu* in 1932, continued to work into the fifties and died in 1973.



Cecil Holland at work on Bull Montana's make-up for *The Lost World*.

Another character actor turned make-up artist I

should mention here is one Janus Piccoulas. Born in Greece in 1889, his family migrated to the States in the early years of the century and he found work in the nascent film industry, initially behind the scenes and then as a stunt man, actor and make-up artist.

It was another ape make-up which made his name, this time for Jacques Lerner in Raoul Walsh's *The Monkey Talks*. So convincing was this make-up that one bamboozled reviewer commented that the chimpanzee was so well trained that he seemed to have almost human qualities.

When Universal were casting about for someone to provide Conrad Veidt's make-up for *The Man Who Laughs* (in a role originally earmarked for Lon Chaney), Carl Laemmle Jr turned to Piccoulas and began undoubtedly the most productive partnership between producer and make-up artist in the cinema.

He will play a central role later in this story under his more familiar adopted name: Jack P. Pierce.

Chapter Five

Main Attraction

Lon Chaney

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or Cecil Holland, the cloak of invisibility was at the heart of his whole *raison d'être* as an actor, and his sentiments would certainly have been cheered to the rafters by the man who emerged from the undoubted anonymity of a drapery store to become the master of transformation and disguise: Lon Chaney.

Chaney is frequently described as the first star of the horror film, although this is not a description he would have recognised himself, since the term 'horror film' was not used in his lifetime. The precise number of films he made can probably never be established, as bit-part players were not credited in the early days of cinema, but the number of films for which he received an on-screen credit from 1913 to his death in 1930 is 156. More than seventy of these came in the first four years when they were often one- or two-reelers being churned out on an almost weekly basis. For example, 1915 alone shows him making thirty-four films: twenty-eight as an actor,

two as director, two as actor/director, one as writer/director and one as actor/writer/director.

In addition to these skills, he was no stranger to the scenic and wardrobe departments and arrived in the movies after a career as an actor, singer and dancer on the stage. It was by no means unusual to find him playing more than one part in a film, and, indeed, these multiple roles became something of a trademark. Thus, at the climax of *Outside the Law*, Chaney playing a Chinaman shoots Chaney playing a gangster; in *The Unholy Three* he plays a crook who disguises himself as an old woman; in *The Blackbird* he appears as a man who pretends to be his own brother; in *London After Midnight* he is both the vampire and the detective hunting him down. All of these films were directed by the man who seems to have inspired him most, Tod Browning, who said of him:



'He was the hardest working person in the studio. There wasn't a thing he wouldn't turn a hand to. He'd help move props, lights or even make up the extras. It was the trouper's spirit of him.'

It is his ability to almost literally reconstruct himself from role to role and film to film — unmatched, I believe, by any actor before or since — that sets him apart. Not only for the acting skills

Lon Chaney.

involved, but also because all his make-ups were designed, constructed and applied by himself, and all his skill was self-taught.

'Between pictures there is no Lon Chaney'² he once said. While this is clearly not true, it was an illusion which he was at pains to create in the mind of the public, partly to reinforce the sense of mystery about himself and partly to deflect attention away from his private life, which he determinedly kept just that. He disliked and mistrusted the glitzy, glamorous side of Hollywood life and was happy to spend his spare time (and at a career average of eight films a year, there can't have been much of it) well away from movieland. Indeed, I would suggest that few movie fans — even horror fans — today would recognise his own face immediately, while the faces of Erik, the Phantom of the Opera, or Quasimodo, the Hunchback of Notre Dame, are immediately familiar.

He was born on April Fool's Day 1883, in Colorado Springs, Colorado, the second of four children. His parents were both deaf mutes: his mother Emma since birth and his father Frank since contracting typhoid fever as a toddler. In addition, Lon's mother was stricken with rheumatism shortly after the birth of her third son. She was bed-ridden and, with his older brothers and his father working, Lon was forced to leave school at the age of ten to care for his mother, five-year-old Carrie and baby George. The legend which has grown up is that Lon developed his skills by miming the events of the day for his mother's entertainment.

His older brother, John, had obtained work at the Colorado Springs Opera House. Lon had already started working there at the age of twelve as a prop boy, but his father — doubtless thinking about a 'proper job' (as fathers will and Lon himself would) — arranged for him to learn the trade of carpet-layer and wallpaper-hanger. Chaney's biographer, Michael F. Blake, tells us that on the day of his

death, the local paper reported 'some of his work remains to be seen in the paper on the walls of the Antlers Hotel.'³
Local Wallpaper Man Makes Good!

When John asked for his help again, Lon quit his job and his real career had begun. By 1902 he was employed as a full-time stagehand (and would retain membership of the stagehand's union throughout his life). Not long after this, he made his stage debut in an amateur production, and drew his first favourable notice from *The Colorado Springs Gazette*:

'Lon Chaney provoked laughter whenever he appeared on the stage and his dancing was received with loud acclamations of approval. As a comedian he is irresistible, and it would be hard to find his equal in dancing among many first class vaudeville performers.'⁴

Out of this venture, the Columbia Opera Company was born, and Chaney was soon off on the road and into the life of touring stock theatre, a world of which Michael F. Blake gives a vivid portrait, drawing on Lon's own memories from a *Photoplay* profile:

'... the company felt they were in the lap of luxury when they got to play in a theatre that had dressing rooms. In most theatres, a sheet was hung up on a rope in an area backstage, and women changed on one side of the sheet, men on the other. When the company played theatres with no dressing rooms, the actors had to store their trunks in the orchestra pit and go out in front of the audience, pick out their changes from the trunks and hurry backstage to dress. When they played small towns that had no theatres, a meeting hall or a storefront served as a stage; for footlights, the company had to make do with coal-oil lamps, which had a nasty habit of blowing out during the performance. It was then up to the performers to walk downstage and re-light the lamps while still delivering their lines.'⁵

In 1905, a sixteen-year-old singer called Cleve Creighton auditioned for and joined the company. The precise

chronology for what happened next is confusing and sometimes contradictory, but by the following year Lon and Cleva had married and she had given birth to a son, Creighton Tull Chaney, whom we will meet again as Lon Chaney Jnr.

The family stayed on the road together and by 1910 Lon and Cleva were working at the Olympic Theatre in Los Angeles (several shows a day, seven days a week, \$35 a week). By 1913, Lon was working as actor, choreographer and stage manager for comedians Kolb and Dill in San Francisco. When that show arrived in Los Angeles, it brought the strains in Chaney's marriage to breaking point. Cleva, who possessed a fine singing voice, had been making something of a name for herself as a cabaret singer. Lon may have been pressuring her to give up her career and look after their son, and it would seem that she dissented when Lon announced his intention of touring with Kolb and Dill. Whatever the reason, after performing at Brink's Cafe on the evening of 30 April, she walked over to the Majestic Theatre, argued with Lon backstage and, standing in the wings, swallowed a vial of bichloride of mercury.

Cleva was rushed to hospital and her life was saved. Lon, denying that it was a suicide attempt, told reporters that she had mistaken the bottle for her medicine and added: 'Our differences are all straightened out now.'⁶ They weren't. Within a month they had separated. Divorce followed, with sole custody of the child being granted to Lon. He drew a veil of silence over Cleva Creighton: even Lon Jnr was unaware that she was still alive until after his father's death. Cleva, her career destroyed by the damage the mercury did to her vocal chords, died in 1967.

During all this private turmoil, Lon was taking the decisive step in his career: out of the theatre and into the movies.

His earliest credited appearance on screen was in a one-reel comedy made by the young Universal company. Called

Poor Jakes Demise, it was released on 16 August 1913.

He made an impression pretty quickly. The studio's trade paper, *The Universal Weekly*, published a review of his performance as 'The Greaser' in the two-reel *Tragedy of Whispering Creek*, released in May 1914, which almost stands as a blueprint for the next sixteen years:

!Mr Chaney has used his own ideas in working out the character, a pervert, in this play, and what he has given us is startling to an unusual degree. True, he paints a horrible picture for us — one that is apt to cause a feeling of revulsion. But that is as it should be. In fact, Mr Chaney has created a *new* character — one that will live long — that will be copied as a new standard by others.'⁷

The secrets of the famous make-up box were also clearly being employed to good effect. As early as 1916, *Motion Picture Weekly* carried an article entitled 'Lon Chaney: A Master of Make-Up'. I have said that his skills were largely self-taught, and so they were, but he had obviously learnt and honed his craft through his years in the theatre. In 1927, he told *Theatre Magazine*:

'All during the time I was travelling about the country with repertory and one night stands, the thing that interested me most was make-up. It was not merely the applying of grease paint and putty noses to the face, but mental make-up as well... I felt there was a greater field in characterisations; nor was it the stereotyped characterisations that interested me. If I played the role of an old man, I tried to crawl into the old man's mind rather than merely build up a putty nose and don white whiskers. Even in the make-up I attempted to avoid the conventional. For example, whenever I was given an old man's role to play, I tried to inject into it some distinctive mannerism; a limp perhaps, or a drawn arm, or maybe just a slight nervous twitch of the face; anything, in fact, to take the character out of the 'Lesson Number Fifty-two In Make-up: Old Men' class.

'Grotesqueries as such do not attract me; it is vivid characterisations for which I strive. I want my make-up simply to add to the picture, to show at a glance the sort of character I am portraying. But I want my role to go deeper than that. I

Lon with his box of tricks. This is a staged shot: no pictures of Chaney applying his make-ups exist.



want to dig down into the mind and heart of the role. But, as a man's face reveals much that is in his mind and heart, I attempt to show this by the make-up I use, and the make-up is merely the prologue.'⁸

It is important to emphasise that screen make-up developed out of the theatre. After all, the majority of actors came to movies having first worked on the stage where, as now, they would be expected to take care of their own make-up, no matter how elaborate it might be. What this allowed — what Chaney is articulating here — was for the actor to consider his or her make-up as an integral part of their characterisation and to allow the one to grow out of and influence the other.

. In addition to his make-up skills, he also used his physical training from the theatre to extraordinary effect, and to such extremes that accusations of masochism have

sometimes been levelled at him. Chaney himself described it as 'an attitude of body'⁹, emphasising again that he saw the physical and psychological aspects of his characters as being intimately linked. Indeed, I wonder whether he might not have been an avid reader of Charles Dickens, since in his approach to characterisation he seems to share much with the novelist — an actor himself and once described as the greatest English dramatist who never wrote a play — including a tendency to sometimes want to gild the lily.

As Frog in *The Miracle Man* Chaney had to pretend to be crippled in order to fake a miracle cure. He used a habit he had of sitting cross-legged and then placing his foot behind his other ankle which he then exaggerated so effectively that the director dropped his conviction that only a contortionist would be able to play the part. Not that Lon was satisfied with this. Plans to add a hunchback and withered hand were dropped, although he did grow stubble and learned to roll his eyes back in their sockets to give the impression of blindness.

In *The Penalty*, he played the part of Blizzard, who swears vengeance on the inexperienced doctor who needlessly amputated both his legs below the knee when he was a boy. Lon had both his legs strapped up behind him, and then put on oversized trousers with leather stumps which attached to a belt. With the aid of undersized crutches he could then hobble about on his knees. In one scene though, he jumps off a raised platform, lands on his stumps and attempts to walk without crutches. He could not manage more than twenty minutes without having his legs unstrapped to allow the circulation to return and the role may have left him with permanent back damage.

Earlier in his career, Lon had parted company with Universal over their refusal to pay him more than \$100 a week. In 1923, they welcomed him back on a contract worth more than twenty-five times that figure for the

performance that would establish him as a major star: Quasimodo in *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, directed by Wallace Worsley.

The idea to adapt Victor Hugo's classic novel *Notre Dame De Paris* was Irving Thalberg's, the so-called 'Boy Wonder' who had become Universal's head of production at the age of twenty, although Chaney claimed in a January 1922 interview that he had been 'dreaming of playing that part for three years'¹⁰ and had already planned the make-up. For its time, the film was a massive undertaking. Its budget of \$1,250,000 was simply unheard of, as was the scale of its ambition: a full year of pre-production; sets covering twenty acres; a four month shooting schedule and a replica of the facade of Notre Dame so solidly built that it was re-used in the 1939 remake and remained a feature of the Universal back-lot until it was destroyed by fire in 1967.

Chaney's make-up was no less epic, and if he was not a reader of Dickens, he had certainly mugged up on his Hugo: Lon's final appearance in the film being a remarkably accurate recreation of the novelist's description of Quasimodo.

It should be pointed out at this stage that much of what has been written and said about precisely how Chaney achieved his make-ups is guesswork: partly due to the passage of time and partly, as has already been said, because of his determination to keep his secrets secret (he once said: 'There are tricks in my peculiar trade that I don't care to divulge any more than a magician will give away his art.'), and as a result there is less than unanimity. I will therefore offer a kind of digest, but if I am inclined to accept any version as authoritative it would be Michael F. Blake's 1990 biography *The Man Behind the Thousand Faces*, not least because the author is himself a professional make-up artist.

To illustrate this point, we need look no further than the hump of the Hunchback. Depending on which version you read, this weighed twenty, forty, seventy (most commonly),

or in excess of 100lbs and was made either of solid rubber or moulded out of plaster. Blake cites co-star Patsy Ruth Miller as the authority for 20lbs or less and plaster. This would seem as close to the horse's mouth as we might get, though I wonder how honest about his precious secrets Chaney would have been with another actor. Whatever the truth, I think we can all agree that it was pretty damn heavy — even at 20lbs, this is like trying to spend a day acting with a toddler sitting on your shoulders!

Chaney had designed a harness to hold the hump, with straps front and back which attached to a leather belt in such a way that he could pull the front straps tighter to force himself into a stooping posture. This arrangement may also have incorporated some kind of breastplate and shoulder pads. For

the scene in which Quasimodo appears stripped to the waist to be flogged, he pulled a flesh-coloured rubber suit or shirt over this whole arrangement which was tufted with hair (crepe or animal, take your pick) on the chest, arms, back and neck.

Most descriptions of the facial make-up suggest that nose putty and plasto (morticians wax) were used to create the deformed eye and gargoyle features. Not so, says Blake, asserting that the make-up would be built up in layers using adhesives (spirit-gum or flexible collodion) and cotton. This technique was used in the theatre and, as we will see, was also the method employed by Jack Pierce for *Frankenstein*. It also seems to have had the advantage of being re-usable, saving time and money. The blind eye, which Hugo described as 'completely overwhelmed and buried by an enormous wen' or wart, was probably putty or wax, Lon's own eye having been taped shut. Crepe hair would bush out the eyebrows, putty would reshape the nose and, Blake suggests, the ends of cigar holders would be pushed into the nostrils to exaggerate their shape. The false teeth were created out of gutta-percha, which is a rubber material used by dentists for temporary fillings, and, with the addition of the wig, the transform-

Quasimodo: The Hunchback of Notre Dame.

ation was complete. The process probably took three to four hours, and it bears repeating that the whole thing was designed, constructed and applied by Lon himself. All he had to do now was act!

Chaney was always a supremely fit and strong man, but was left exhausted by the movie. Performing for long hours in Quasimodo's crouched posture with the weight (whatever it was!) of the hump on his back seems to have exacerbated the back trouble brought on by *The Penalty* and the strain of squinting through one eye all day may have been the reason why he needed glasses for the rest of his life. However, he had the satisfaction of seeing the finished movie become Universal's biggest hit of 1923, selected by several critics as one of the year's 'Ten Best' and his own performance praised ('transcends anything he has done'¹² wrote *Photoplay*).

Irving Thalberg had departed Universal for the fledgling MGM and lured Chaney to join him, but at the end of 1924 Lon was back at Universal for what is perhaps his greatest and most famous role: Erik, the Phantom of the Opera. The make-up is quite the equal of *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* and Chaney again seems to have gone right to the source for his inspiration — the novel by Gaston Leroux — which describes the Phantom as looking like 'a dead man's skull.'

Once again the details of the make-up are sketchy and incomplete. He is certainly wearing a 'bald cap' to allow the Phantom's hairline to start higher than his own, and has built up his cheekbones in the same way he did for Quasimodo. For the uptilting of the nose, implants in the nostrils have been suggested, but Blake claims the use of fishskin, which had nothing to do with fish but was in fact animal gut. A thin strip of this would have been used, with one end glued to the tip of the nose, pulled upwards and backwards, and then

glued to the ridge of the nose and onto the forehead. The gutta-percha teeth are there again, and to my eye look very like Quasimodos. The skull-like appearance was also aided by glueing his ears flat to the side of the head. The rest of the look was achieved, in Lons own words, by 'the use of paints in the right shades and in the right places.'³

Chaney's physicalisation of the Phantom is supreme and so far removed from the bent, skulking Quasimodo that it is almost hard to believe it is the same actor. Highly stylised, upright, noble and proudly malevolent — if occasionally teetering into melodrama — Lon's performance is again the reason for classic status being claimed by a film which is deeply unsatisfactory as a whole.

Back at MGM in 1925, Chaney re-established his association with Tod Browning, who directed seven of his thirteen

films over the next four years. How great a partnership it was is often challenged since Chaney mostly achieved his reputation in projects not directed by Browning, while the directors best known work came after the actor's death: *Dracula* and *Freaks*. Chaney himself held that their finest film together was *London After Midnight*, but we will have to take his word for it

Erik: The Phantom of the Opera.

because, at the time of writing, no print of the film is known to exist. It is clearly significant, if only for being the first Hollywood vampire movie. In its absence, the film has developed an aura and a status which may be in excess of the facts, though the extant stills certainly promise much. At the time of its release, the *New York Times* wrote of a somewhat incoherent narrative"⁴, while *Photoplay* reported that as the vampire Chaney was 'perfect', but as the Scotland Yard detective he was 'a little less convincing than usual.'⁵

The vampire's make-up is as intriguing and dramatic as ever. The gutta-percha teeth are sharpened to vampiric points — notably all of them, not just the canines — with wires to push the top corners of the mouth upwards and form a permanent grinning rictus. Wires were apparently also used to create the unsettling 'pop-eye' effect, fitting around the eye like a monocle, though I'm sceptical of the suggestion that they ran round to the back of his head and were tightened before each shot.

Chaney now had just one more mountain left to climb: the transition to the talkies, a challenge which destroyed more than one silent career. He was reluctant to make the move. Among the silent stars, only Charlie Chaplin resisted the

*The vampire: London After
Midnight.*

urge to talk for longer than Chaney. Perhaps he sensed that something of his mystery would be diluted when his characters were required to speak. Possibly, as Blake suggests, he of all people was acutely aware of abandoning his deaf audience by moving into talkies. He dismissed the talkies as 'pretty awful'⁶ and even after accepting the inevitable, was downbeat about the whole thing. If it didn't work, he'd go back to the drapery store or become 'what I've never been since I went into pictures

— a man whose sole interest is the money he's being paid."⁷ He even developed a kind of gung-ho dismissiveness, stating, 'I haven't taken a single sound test and I'm not going to.'⁸ About coaching he said, 'It ruins voices.'⁹

But according to Calvin Thomas Beck this was all a careful smoke-screen and he was in fact:

'... immersed in technical research around the sound-rooms, studying recording devices at the studios. He had been in the mixing rooms, not only watching the sound mixer do its stuff but occasionally doing the mixing himself and experimenting... he was studying sound techniques with the same devotion and intensity that he had previously applied to the intricacies of facial and physical make-up.'²⁰

This makes much more sense. After all, why would a man who had spent ten years on the stage be worried about his voice at all? Far more likely that he was carefully examining all the technicalities and possibilities of sound: treating it, in fact

— like make-up and body language — as another facet of characterisation.

He did take a voice test, in February 1930, with perfect results and on 1 April, his forty-seventh birthday, began production on his first talking picture, a remake of his 1925 hit *The Unholy Three*, which had been directed by

Tod Browning. It was an ideal choice, for it allowed Chaney to enter talkies with a typically bravura swagger.

He played Echo, a ventriloquist who — with his partners, a midget and a strongman — turns to crime, masquerading as an old woman selling parrots. Lon learned ventriloquism for the side-show scenes and far from fretting about his own voice, added those of the old woman, a parrot, the dummy and a young girl in the audience for good measure! Blake tells us that Lon signed an affidavit swearing that all the voices were his and quotes the *New York Times* review:

'Mr Chaney has made a further contribution to the motion picture... he has destroyed the effect of the phrase, "see your favourite actor; he speaks." For while others were loudly proclaiming the finding of a forgotten note, he quietly went fishing and came back with five. The industry will never be the same again.'²¹

Photoplay reported his voice to be 'deep, vibrant and perfectly poised.'²² The Compleat Actor, it would seem, ready to sweep all before him.

But it was not to be. Chaney was already a dying man. During the filming of one of his last silent films, *Thunder*, in the snow and cold of the Wisconsin winter, he contracted pneumonia and was hospitalised before starting work on *The Unholy Three*. Another story suggests that a sliver of artificial snow — uncooked corn flakes — had lodged in his throat. He was experiencing irritation, together with a persistent cough. The studio said he was undergoing a routine tonsillectomy: in fact malignant tumours were being removed. Following the release of *The Unholy Three*, his health deteriorated rapidly, and on 26 August, a massive haemorrhage of the throat and lungs claimed his life.

The movie world was shocked. Eulogies poured out. Audiences reportedly spontaneously stood in silence before every performance of *The Unholy Three*. Hundreds of mourners filed past his casket which was given a US

Marine escort for the funeral (he had been made an honorary Marine after playing Sgt O'Hara in *Tell It to the Marines* in 1926). Lon Chaney was buried at Forest Lawn in Glendale on the 28 August. As his coffin was lowered into the ground, all the studios in Hollywood came to a standstill to honour his memory.

It is impossible not to be moved by the cruel irony and pathos of a man born into a childhood dominated by the silence of his parents, who makes a career out of silence and then successfully finds his voice only to have it snatched away from him by, of all things, cancer of the throat.

And what if he had lived? The obvious suggestion is that Tod Browning would have wanted no one else to play Dracula, so we might never have heard of Bela Lugosi. And if that had been a success, he would have been the obvious choice to play Frankenstein's Monster, so what would have become of Boris Karloff? However, he was under exclusive contract to MGM at the time of his death, so it may have been more likely that he would have been groomed there as a horror star to rival Universal's. Increasing unionisation of the industry may also have made it difficult for him to continue to design and apply his own make-up. Watching his 'straight' acting roles suggests he might have found a niche in gangster movies in the mould of Edward G. Robinson or James Cagney, whose physique and bravura style he shared. Indeed it was Cagney who was chosen to play Lon in the 1957 bio-pic *Man of a Thousand Faces*.

The last word on Lon Chaney comes from the memory of a fellow actor at Universal:

'One day, just as I was leaving the studio, pretty discouraged at the way my 'career' was going, I heard a car honk behind

me — and Lon Chaney gave me a lift home. We talked for over an hour about the picture business and my own chances of getting somewhere. He said to me: "The secret

of success in Hollywood lies in being different from everyone else." He cited his own career, his own unusual parts, as an example. "Find something no one else can or will do — and they'll begin to take notice of you. Hollywood is full of competent actors. What the screen needs is individuality."²³

The actor listening to the wise words of the maestro was an Englishman. Born in 1887, and christened William Henry Pratt, he was due to follow his family into the Indian diplomatic service. However, he suddenly jumped ship to Canada and found work as a farm labourer, but, intent on a career in the theatre, he got himself an agent by inventing a resum^e. Having no experience at all beyond playing the Demon King in pantomime as a boy, he wrote down the title of every play he could remember seeing back in London and pretended he'd been in them! The deception worked, and the agent found him a job. Feeling that Bill Pratt was not the most resonant of thespian names, he changed it to the one by which you may know him a little better: Boris Karloff.

Part Three

The Golden Age

*One of the most familiar figures of the twentieth century:
Boris Karlojf as the Monster in Frankenstein.*



**My Dear
Old Monster**
Boris Karloff

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he so-called 'Golden Age' of horror films did not, of course, begin with Boris Karloff, but rather with Bela Lugosi Blasko, the unknown Hungarian actor who had won the role of Count Dracula in the stage play of Bram Stoker's novel on Broadway, and was chosen to reprise the role in Universal's film version directed by Tod Browning. Nor did it begin by design: Universal had simply bought up the rights to a number of hit Broadway plays and *Dracula* happened to be in the shopping basket. When the movie opened in February 1931, it quickly grossed half a million dollars and Universal chiefs immediately gave the go-ahead for an adaptation of Mary Shelley's nineteenth century novel *Frankenstein*. If the fates were overlooking events in Hollywood and conspiring to give this unlikely but crucial career break to Boris Karloff, then it has to be said they chose a most circuitous route to get there.

Chapter Six Having bluffed his way into the theatre
after about a year

of digging ditches, all did not immediately go well. It was quickly apparent to the theatre company who hired him that the persona of the experienced English actor was a fabrication and that he actually hadn't a clue about acting. At the start of his first performance he was earning \$30 a week. When the curtain fell his wages went with it, down to \$15. But at least he wasn't sacked!

Like Holland and Chaney before him, he took up the life of an itinerant stock actor. It didn't last long, though. While performing in Regina, Saskatchewan, in western Canada, the theatre and most of the town were blown away by a massive tornado. The company disbanded and Boris was digging ditches once more. Eventually, he hooked up with another touring company and was off on the road again, across Canada and the northern United States, continuing what Boris described as 'the years of bitter oblivion.' In 1914, he applied to fight with the British army in the First World War but was turned down on medical grounds. And so onwards, backwards and forwards, up and down, before arriving in Los Angeles some time in 1917 where, like his predecessors, he began to slowly drift into movies. Extra and bit- part work was about all he would get, but he stuck at

Boris Karloff.

it, appearing in approximately forty films during the twenties.

'While Carl Laemmle Jnr [Universal's chief of production] surrendered his fingers to a manicurist, his hair to a barber, his thoughts to his secretaries and his voice to a Dictaphone, I explained the general plan of the film to him. He told me to type up the story right away and send it to the head of the scenario department.'²

That is how Robert Florey, writing in his 1948 autobiography *Hollywood: Yesterday and Today*, recalled the precise moment at which *Frankenstein* was given the official go-ahead. Florey, a young Frenchman working in Hollywood, had been given the responsibility for turning Shelley's novel into a film. In fact, the basis for the screenplay was Peggy Webling's 1927 stage adaptation, *Frankenstein: An Adventure in the Macabre*, which Universal had purchased for \$20,000 plus one percent of gross profits. Florey made rapid progress, even directing a two-reel test using sets from *Dracula* and with Lugosi playing the Monster. An early publicity poster was printed, giving Lugosi billing. The sequence of events which followed is slightly confused, but the upshot is that when cameras rolled in earnest in August 1931, both director and star had been replaced.

In Florey's case, he appears to have suffered from lack of clout. He was the hired hand doing a job of work and was simply dropped in favour of the flavour of the month. That flavour was James Whale, whom Florey himself described as 'The Ace of Universal'. The English actor, designer and director had made his name in London with his 1929 production of R.C. Sherriff's First World War drama *Journey's End*, which starred the soon-to-be Henry Frankenstein, Colin Clive. After overseeing the New York production, Whale was invited to Hollywood to direct the movie version, and brought Clive to

America to play the lead. It was a great success and Whale followed it with another war story, *Waterloo Bridge*. Realising the talent in his midst, Laemmle offered Whale his choice of projects and his choice was *Frankenstein*. He later said:

'I chose *Frankenstein* out of about thirty available stories because it was the strongest meat and gave me the chance to dabble in the macabre. [It] was a sensational story and had a chance to become a sensational picture.'¹

So it was *au revoir* to Monsieur Florey. He was given the adaptation of Edgar Allen Poe's *Murders in the Rue Morgue* to direct as a make-peace. His contribution to *Frankenstein* was not credited when WTiale's film was released, about which he was understandably bitter.

As for Lugosi's departure, things are a little more complicated, not least because everybody involved seems to have their own version of events. The reason most commonly given is that Bela did not like the idea of a non-speaking role. He is also known to have resisted attempts by Jack Pierce, Universal's head of make-up, to experiment with make-up on *Dracula* and for any actor who didn't fancy wearing a lot of make-up, the Monster was clearly one to avoid. Lugosi's insistence that he 'made up for the role and had tests taken, which were pronounced okay'⁴ does not, however, chime with other people's memories.

In fact, Lugosi insisted on providing his own make-up for the screen-test. Edward Van Sloan, who had played Van Helsing to Bela's Dracula and was to play Dr Waldman in *Frankenstein*, described that make-up to *Famous Monsters of Filmland* in 1964 as looking a lot like Paul Wegener's Golem: ' [His] head was about four times normal size, with a broad wig on it... he had a polished, clay-like skin... [it was] like something out of *Babes in Toyland*'

Two years later, in *Monster Mania*, Jack Pierce joined in, suggesting that Lugosi 'had too many ideas of his own and 'thought his ideas were better than everybody else's.'⁶ Florey records this account of the test-shoot:

'As I was working with the other actors, during a time when the Monster had not yet 'come to life', Lugosi kept exclaiming, "Enough is enough", that he was not going to be a grunting, babbling idiot for anybody, and that any tall extra could be the Monster. "I was a star in my country, and will not be a scarecrow over here!" he said repeatedly.'⁷

Clearly, Lugosi was not a happy camper. However, his suggestion that Laemmle agreed to release him from the picture if he found a replacement, and that he personally scoured the talent agencies and so 'discovered' Boris Karloff — 'I recommended him. He took tests. And that's how he happened to become a famous star of horror pictures; my rival, in fact.'⁸ — can only be dismissed as a bizarre flight of fancy.

And what of Boris meanwhile? With his stage-trained voice, the transition to the talkies had not been a difficult one for him, in spite of the pronounced lisp which was to become his peculiar trademark. He had had something of a break, too. He had played the role of a killer ('a small part but a showy one') in a play called *The Criminal Code* and when Columbia Pictures decided to put it on the screen with Howard Hawks directing, Boris was asked to reprise his role. If James Whale saw that film, it might help to explain what happened next.

In later years, Boris liked to describe success as 'a matter of being on the right corner at the right time'⁰, and he now arrived on his corner with perfect timing. A role as another murderer took him from Columbia to Universal and so it was that in the summer of 1931, in his own words 'well past forty, not getting younger, and worried'¹, he made his way to the

Universal canteen to eat the sort of lunch of which every struggling actor dreams:

'James Whale... was lunching at a nearby table. Suddenly he caught my eye and beckoned me over. I leapt — he was the most important director on the lot. He asked me to sit down. I did, holding my breath, and then he said: "Your face has startling possibilities..." I cast my eyes down modestly, and then he said, "I'd like you to test for the Monster in *Frankenstein*." It was shattering — for the first time in my life I had been gainfully employed long enough to buy myself some new clothes and spruce up a bit... Now to hide all this newfound beauty under monster make-up? I said I'd be delighted."² When asked why Whale might have wanted him, Boris replied, 'I didn't ask him, and he didn't tell me.'³ He did suggest that the director might have seen some of his earlier performances. Whale backs up this notion in his recollection:

'Boris Karloff's face had always fascinated me, and I made drawings of his head, added sharp bony ridges where I imagined the skull might have been joined. His physique was weaker than I could wish, but that queer, penetrating personality of his, I felt, was more important than his shape, which could easily be altered.'⁴

None of this meant that Boris had the part, just the chance to screen test for it. And he was not alone. Since Lugosi parted company with the project, the hunt had been on for Universal to find their Monster. Several actors had come and gone without making any impression. John Carradine voted with his feet before the make-up man could even get to work. With tongue in cheek, he later commented, 'I wasn't going to play any monster: I was from the thee-ah-tuh!'"

Exactly how Boris himself felt about this offer is a little difficult to gauge. With hindsight, he would insist:

'When I was offered the part of the Monster in *Frankenstein* I knew that I'd found it at last. The part was

what we call a natural. Any actor who played it was destined for success."⁶

But he is also on record as saying: 'I had no idea of the importance of the role'¹⁷, and even with the role in the bag and the picture under way, he still seems to have been far from certain about it, as Edward Van Sloan recalled:

'When he saw the rushes of the picture he mumbled unhappily that the film would ruin his career. I told him, "Not so, Boris, not so! You're madeV"TM

But first things first. Karloff now had to put his fate and his face into the hands of Jack Pierce. Fortunately the two men liked and respected each other and quickly established a strong working relationship that was to last for many years.

For two or three hours every evening, for as long as three weeks, Pierce and Karloff worked to perfect the make-up: Boris sitting patiently in the chair, Jack experimenting and fine-tuning. James Whale may also have been present at some of these sessions. Pierce takes credit for designing the makeup, but he himself acknowledged that the finished version was a compromise between his and Whale's ideas, suggesting that the director's contribution was considerable.

Meanwhile, the clock was ticking. The screen-test was delayed, perhaps at Whale's insistence. Karloff was 'his man' after all, but final say-so on casting would rest with Laemmle. When Colin Clive arrived in New York from England a couple of weeks before the start of shooting, he found a copy of the script waiting for him to read on the journey to Los Angeles. With it was a letter from Whale saying that the film would feature Boris Karloff *or Beta Lugosi*, suggesting that Laemmle was still threatening to use his established star. Pierce's preparations were impressive. He told the *New York Times* in 1939:

'Before I did a bit of designing, I spent three months of research in anatomy, medicine, criminal history,

criminology, ancient and modern burial customs and electrodynamics. My anatomical studies taught me that there are six ways a surgeon can cut the skull in order to take out or put in a brain. I figured that Frankenstein, who was a scientist but no practising surgeon, would take the simplest surgical way. He would cut the top of the skull off, straight across like a pot-lid, hinge it, pop the brain in and then clamp it on tight...

'Here's another thing. I read that Egyptians used to bind some criminals hand and foot and bury them alive. When their blood turned to water after death, it flowed to their extremities, stretched their arms to gorilla length and swelled their hands, feet and faces to abnormal proportions. I thought this might make a nice touch for the Monster, since he was supposed to be made from the corpses of executed felons. So I fixed Karloff up that way.'⁹

Even when Pierce had worked out the mechanics of the make-up, he had another major problem: colour. This was always a problem for make-up artists and actors in the days of black and white film: if Pierce painted the make-up as he wanted it to look — a deathly grey-white — it would simply bleach away under the lights. One report suggests seven separate tests were needed before the right shade was settled on: greenish-grey according to a 1932 article, blue-green according to the man himself.

Nor was Boris an entirely passive part of the process, and he had one major contribution to make. He observed that his eyes 'seemed too normal, and alive and natural for a thing that had only just been put together.'²⁰ Pierce agreed and applied putty or latex to Boris' lids to weigh them down and give that

veiled, half-dead look. Boris also added to the emaciated look of the creature by removing a dental bridge.

All this hard work and dedication paid off. Laemmle was simply stunned by the results. He noted that 'Karloff's eyes mirrored the suffering we needed'²¹ and was also struck by what is Pierce's greatest triumph in this brilliant make-up — it leaves Karloff's face largely free to play the gamut of emotions and allows the audience to see the humanity behind the Monster. Everyone was happy, Karloff was cast, and the cameras rolled at last.

And so Boris Karloff began the most important job of his career, the one that would transform him from a nobody to a star. But he was also beginning a gruelling schedule that would take the naturally phlegmatic, uncomplaining actor to breaking point and beyond. The call for cast and crew each morning was 9am, which meant that Boris had to be *ready* by that time each morning and consequently had to report to the

Universal lot at 4am. He was therefore probably out of bed each day around 3am.

Jack Pierce (and probably an assistant) would also be ready, and the transformation would begin. The false, flattened top of the head — made from rubber and probably with its wig already attached — was put in place and the brow, face

Jack Pierce applies Boris make-up.

and neck gradually built up by means of thin layers of cotton and adhesive liquids, probably using the same technique that we have already seen Lon Chaney employing for Quasimodo and Erik. Karloff said that layers of cheese-cloth were used to obtain the look of pores in the skin. The famous 'bolts' were then attached to the neck with more cotton and adhesive (and for some time afterwards, Karloff carried two small scars where these had been positioned). They were not bolts at all, of course, as Pierce was quick to point out:

'They were inlets for electricity: plugs, not bolts. Don't forget that the Monster was an electrical gadget and that electricity was his life-force.'

With the eyelids weighed down, and wires fitted to keep the edges of the mouth pulled out and down, a four hour makeup process was complete. But this was by no means the end of the actor's discomfort.

To fill out his physique, he wore a doubly-quilted suit under the Monster's costume. In the heat of a Californian summer and in the days before air-conditioning or cool suits this meant that, as Karloff recalled:

'After an hour's work I'd be sopping wet. I'd have to change into a spare undersuit, often still damp from the previous round. So I felt, most of the time, as if I were wearing a clammy shroud. No doubt it added to the realism.'²³

When the company broke for lunch each day, Boris never joined them, but retired to his dressing-room bungalow to eat his lunch stark naked!

In addition to these discomforts, he had steel braces on his back, arms and legs to reduce mobility. His asphalt-treader's boots — weighing 13lbs each — were fitted with lifts to increase his height, an impression that was aided by having the arms and legs of the Monster's suit cut deliberately short.

With the whole process complete, he now stood over seven feet tall (but still short of the eight feet Mary Shelley specified) and had gained nearly 50lbs in weight.

There are reports of parts of the make-up melting or crumbling under the heat of the lights and of the wig slipping. In particular, the hooded eyelids which Karloff had requested caused constant problems, with often painful consequences as they melted into his eyes.

Additionally, Boris was placed under virtual house arrest by Laemmle after causing a secretary to faint when he encountered her on a stroll one day. He was now forbidden to leave the soundstage and was accompanied everywhere he went, with a veil thrown over his head to hide his monstrous features.

He is also said to have been working sixteen hour days. This probably includes make-up application and removal but



The completed make-up. excludes travelling time.

I suspect that this may be a conservative estimate, since his 'improved' schedule for the 1935 sequel *Bride of Frankenstein* still shows a fifteen hour day. There is an apocryphal story which has him going home with his make-up on and sleeping with his head propped between two piles of books, although I have never seen this documented anywhere. There is, however, this mem

ory of actor Charles Starrett, who would later star with Boris in *The Mask of Fu Manchu*

the summer we had a terrible drought — Boris was making *Frankenstein*. One evening, I was driving home when I suddenly nearly drove my car into the ditch — there in the beautiful garden was the Monster itself, tenderly watering the roses! Boris was such a dedicated gardener, he was afraid he'd lose the roses to the heat, so he had rushed home without taking off his make-up to catch them at sundown — the best time for watering... it was quite a sight!²⁴

The only problem is that I'm not sure Boris had acquired the luxuries of a rose garden at the time of *Frankenstein*. Maybe Starrett is thinking of *Bride of Frankenstein* or *Son of Frankenstein*. But shame on me for ruining a good story. Here is that *Bride of Frankenstein* schedule:

4.30 am	Wake-up call.
5.20	Travel to studio (a fifteen mile journey).
6.00	A cosmeticist prepared his skin, while he ate a light breakfast.
7.00 - 12 noon	Make-up.
12.30pm	Strapped into his leg and body pads and put into his weighted boots.
1.30	Lunch.
2.00 - 7.00	On set. There was always a tea break at four o'clock, probably a reflection of the number of Englishmen present!
7.00 - 8.00	Make-up removed.
8.00	Cold shower, light supper and a cup of tea, and a massage to aid the restricted circulation in his legs.
8.30	Drive home.
9.30	In bed, studying the next day's script. ²⁵

My first comment on this is that at the end of a day in make-up (or at the end of a day not in make-up come to that), my thoughts tend to be drifting rather more in the direction of a cold beer than a cold shower!

But the serious point I want to draw attention to is that out of his fourteen to fifteen hour day, Boris spends only five hours on set (he's actually spending more time in the make-up chair) and that by the time he starts work — by which I mean *acting* — he has already been at the studio for eight hours.

Doubtless the studio system was better placed to deal with this, but it is a fundamental problem with playing this kind of role, and one which I have run up against myself. Simply put, producers don't like paying for a long day with such a limited time on set. Nor should they: time is the single most expensive item in movie-making. Directors and assistant directors want the make-up perfect — of course they do — but they also want you on set *now*, and seem to find it difficult to understand that they can't have both. And for the actor trapped in the middle, it can all get very difficult and distressing.

Boris didn't have the joys of contact-lenses to deal with either. Although by

*Boris relaxes during Bride of
Frankenstein in his 'Monster chair'.
Specially constructed for him, it
allowed Boris to recline rather than
try to sit.*

Hellraiser III, lenses had been found which I could wear all day without any problems, on the first two films I could only wear them for a set length of time (I think an hour and a half, but my memory is a bit hazy on precise figures), and then I would have to take them out and rest my eyes for an hour. I was given dire warnings by the optician about wearing them any longer, and I was determined to heed his advice. On set, however, it was hell for everybody. As soon as the lenses went in, the 'meter' was running, and if I gave a warning that they were going to have to come out in fifteen or twenty minutes, I would invariably be told: 'Please, Doug, just one more shot.' And, being an amenable kind of guy, I'd agree to that. And one shot takes thirty minutes, forty-five minutes, an hour, and the lenses are starting to hurt, and I'm also aware that they're now rushing to get me done, I'm losing coverage, dropping shots. 'No, no, please, I'll stay, destroy my eyesight forever, but make sure I look good...'

Long working days simply come with the territory, and I have no problem with them (I think my longest working days in the make-up were eighteen or nineteen hours) — *as long as I'm working*. The nightmare of nightmares is to be called in before dawn, put in the make-up and then left hanging around for hours and hours only to be told you won't be needed. This hasn't happened to me, and things have improved as the sequels have unfolded, but it's come close to it, and has been the only time when I've found myself understanding the mind of a mass murderer. Just put an Uzi in my hands and lead me to the set!

Karloff's experiences on *Frankenstein* led him to complain to the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences (the people who give out the Oscars, but in those days also the actors' 'union') and he did win some concessions, including a later start and an earlier finish to acknowledge the time required to remove the make-up.

On *Bride of Frankenstein*, he was also given Saturdays and Sundays off, which put Boris in seventh heaven as it allowed him to indulge another great passion in his life, and one which he shares with the present writer: cricket. The cricketing bible, *Wisden*, was mailed to Boris from England every year, and he was an active member of the Hollywood Cricket Club which C. Aubrey Smith founded in 1932, where he described himself as 'the happiest rabbit'²⁶ (rabbit being a term employed by cricketers to describe a player who demonstrates outstanding ineptitude for the game, particularly batting). But it must have been an entertaining side that could boast a line up including Karloff, Ronald Colman, Basil Rathbone and Nigel Bruce (is this the only known example of Holmes and Watson batting together?), while the youth policy was nurturing the talents of Errol Flynn, Cary Grant and David Niven. The young Peter Cushing, attempting to launch a career in Hollywood in the late thirties, also guested for the team, so possibly there was a cross-generational appearance by Frankenstein and the Monster.

However, Karloff was clearly still dissatisfied with the protection that the Academy offered actors and this led to him being one of the founder members of the Screen Actors Guild of America or SAG, the union which represents movie actors today and of which I am proud to be a member. Forming a breakaway union was no mean undertaking, and one which required a considerable degree of courage. Early meetings were held in secret, sometimes in Boris' house with entry only possible through the garage. While working on *Hellraiser: Bloodline*, I was given a photograph of Jack Pierce applying the Monster's make-up with a thought bubble emerging from Karloff saying: 'Hmm. I think I'll get me a union...' The Guild honoured Boris in 1951 with the presentation of a gold Honorary Life Membership card. So every member of the Guild who gratefully receives a residual cheque

through the post should know that they partly have the *Frankenstein* make-up to thank for it.

While I 'm on the subject of the suffering of actors (and when did you know an actor not be?), I want to say a bit about make-up removal. Everybody is, always fascinated by the application process, but I always found having the make-up removed a much worse experience, even though it takes only a fraction of the time. I'm sure its only a personal response. For Robert Englund, for example, the removal of the Freddy make-up was the thing that got him through the day, the light at the end of the tunnel'²" as he calls it. I'm not even sure why it bothered me so much: something about being constantly poked at with brushes with the make-up hanging over my eyes would make me feel distincdy nauseous. On the fourth *Hellraiser* film, I sometimes removed it myself which I found much more acceptable. But this description of the removal of Karloff s make-up makes my blood run cold:

'It required one and a half hours of prying, pulling and coaxing, plus special oils and acids. First the wax eyelids came off. The deep scar on the Monster's forehead was then pried into as a good starting point, and from then on it was just one pry and push and acid soaking after another until Boris was himself again.'²⁸ Acids. Acids?!

What the hell were they using? I hope nothing worse than, say, acetic acid — vinegar — but I have my doubts. Thank God for the age of latex! I wonder how much people knew or thought about what they were slapping on actors' skin sixty years ago. It makes me hugely relieved to have worked at a time when make-up artists will test actors for allergic reactions or worry about what chemicals might be being inhaled. Karloff's skin must have taken an unbelievable hammering. I found that repeated applications — but more particularly repeated *removals* — made the soft skin just under my eyes bruise slightly. By *Hellraiser III* I asked for a clause to be written into my

contract stipulating that I would not do more than three consecutive days in make-up.

Given all of this, it seems incredible that Karloff managed any kind of performance at all, let alone such a subtle and sympathetic characterisation. For all the greatness of Chaney's work, this remains the yardstick by which all so-called 'movie monsters' must be judged. Leo Meehan's review for the *Motion Picture Herald* observed:

'If Universal's production of *Frankenstein* does nothing else it establishes Boris Karloff as the one important candidate who has arisen for the mantle of the late Lon Chaney as a delineator of weird and grotesque roles. Because of his restraint, his intelligent simplicity of gesture, carriage, voice and make-up, Karloff has truly created a Frankenstein Monster. Had he yielded to the temptation to melodramatise as the opportunity offered, the character would have been far less formidable, horrible, terrible, and a lot of other 'ibles' which might be added. Karloff has done some excellent things in pictures, though usually in minor roles. This was his big opportunity, and whether you like the picture or not, you won't deny his efficacy.'²⁹

Initial reactions to the film were not encouraging however. West Coast previews reported a high percentage of walk-outs, and Universal chiefs became nervous about releasing the film at all. Their solution was to emphasise the 'horror' in the advertising (The Man Who Made A Monster), add Edward Van Sloan's pre-credits teaser speech — 'I think it will thrill you. It may... shock you. It might even... horrify you!' — and tack on a new happy ending. Originally, true to Mary Shelley's novel, the creator was destroyed by his creation. Now he was discovered to be still alive, having survived the climactic fire in the mill.

It all seemed to work. On release in November 1931, *Frankenstein* played to packed houses. New York's Mayfair Theatre had to schedule extra screenings and keep the box office open until 2am to cope with demand. The movie

comfortably out-performed *Dracula* in terms of dollars, was named as one of the year's Ten Best and selected for screening at the first Venice Film Festival in 1932.

This same year saw Karloff tackle his other great make-up role: *The Mummy*. Universal constructed the movie for Boris — and dropped his first name: 'Karloff The Uncanny, announced the posters. The film marked the directorial debut of Karl Freund, who had photographed *Metropolis*.

The make-up was once again in the hands of Jack Pierce and it is another stunningly simple masterpiece. Which is not what Boris might have called it if you'd caught him at the end of a day's filming during the creation of the Mummy's reincarnation. If *Frankenstein* was tough, this was 'the most trying ordeal I have endured.'³⁰ According to Paul M. Jensen, this sequence took a week to film, but Gregory William Mank suggests it was all done in one day and night, with Boris reporting for work at the distinctly civilised hour of 11am, going on to set at seven o'clock that evening, shooting until 2am, having the make-up removed and returning home just before dawn. Both writers agree on the length of time the

make-up took to apply: eight hours. Karloff's own comment — 'Physical exhaustion was nothing compared to the nervous exhaustion I suffered.'³ — might suggest that he was required to keep this schedule up for more than a single day.

Pierce began by gluing the actor's ears flat to the side of his head, and then covered his entire face with cotton strips and collodion. Beauty clay was worked in to the cotton, and smeared into Boris's hair. He would then sit under an electric dryer to wait for the whole thing to dry.

(While we're waiting, I'd like to say a word about collodion. I've mentioned it a few times now in relation to both Karloff

and Chaney. When I first came across it, I had no idea what it was, so I went to my dictionary to find out. It defines it as 'a solution of gun-cotton in ether', and it defines gun-cotton as 'an explosive made by steeping cotton in nitric and sulphuric acids: used for blasting.' I only mention this because I read that 'Karloff's sole pleasure during the procedure was *a cigarette*.TM') The drying complete, Boris now had to have his entire body wrapped in 150 yards of linen or gauze ban-

*Boris as the Mummy in its
sarcophagus.*

dage which Pierce had previously soaked in acid and cooked' in an oven to give an authentically aged look. Little wonder that *Photoplay* reported that the finished make-up left him unable to move a muscle of his face."³

For the rest of the shoot, Boris had the unimaginable luxury of a mere one hour in the make-up chair. On release, *The Mummy* was reasonably successful at the box office and Karloff The Uncanny garnered more favourable notices, the *Los Angeles Times* stating that the film 'establishes him as not just a good character actor, but a finished character star.'*

He should have gone on to star in *The Invisible Man* in 1933 with James Whale directing, but a dispute over wages (Universal had a habit of dropping actors when they became more expensive and opting for less established, and therefore cheaper, performers) saw Boris part company with the studio. Claude Rains replaced him in that film and also in *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* before Universal realised their mistake and reinstated Boris on a new contract. His first project was *The Black Cat*, very loosely based on Edgar Allen Poe's story and uniting Karloff and Lugosi for the first time.

Also announced on his return was the sequel to *Frankenstein*, which was originally titled *The Return of Frankenstein*, and went into production at the beginning of 1935. James Whale was again directing, and of course Jack Pierce was in charge of the make-up.

The later starts which Karloff had enjoyed as the filming of *Frankenstein* progressed were more to do with Pierce's professionalism than any beneficence on the part of the Academy. He had succeeded in bringing the application time for the make-up down to about three hours. The modifications for the new make-up, required to take account of the Monster being severely burned in the mill at the end of the first film, meant it had become more

complicated and the whole process had increased to around the five hour mark once more.

With more money to play with, and much more control over the project, Whale aimed for an altogether more ambitious film, and succeeded brilliantly. For me, this vast, camp, Gothic fantasy is not only by some distance the best film of this period, but remains my favourite horror movie of all time. The screenplay offered new challenges to Karloff, summed up by Paul Jensen:

'In *Frankenstein*, [the Monster] had just been born. Whale now dares to take the next logical step and educate him. The Monster smokes, drinks, talks, laughs and cries; he discovers beauty, and good and evil.'³⁵

But Karloff had strong feelings about all this — especially the talking:

'In the second film, they made a great mistake about which I complained but, you know, you don't have much say concerning decisions. The speech — stupid! My argument was that if the Monster had any impact or charm it was because he was inarticulate.'³⁶

I have to say that I really don't understand his response. As an actor, I can't fathom why he wouldn't jump at the chance to develop the characterisation of the Monster and relish the challenge of finding a voice for him. It's certainly one of the reasons why for me his performance here tops that of the first film. And it also gave us one of the great lines of all horror films. In the first film, Colin Clive's Frankenstein had exclaimed, 'It's alive!' as he saw his Monster come to life: here Karloff gives us what we might call 'The Monster's Response': 'We... belong... dead.'

But I do sympathise with that understated aside about decisions. Its been gratifying to me that the *Hellraiser* series has

developed the character of Pinhead as we've gone along; but the fact remains that those decisions are taken by other people and one is always at the mercy of a screenplay, which has several sets of fingerprints on it before it reaches the actor. Before flying out to North Carolina to begin filming *Hell-raiser III* in 1991, I had had a screenplay in my possession for about a month, which I had been studying and making decisions about. On arrival in the States, I was given an updated version which in certain key areas was radically different, directly affecting Pinhead and the performance I was planning to give. I queried them, and managed to win back a couple of things, but it was really too late by then, and I now had two or three days to rethink a months preparations.

The truth is that making movies is fundamentally making compromises, for actors no more than anyone else. But you can reach a compromise too far, and in 1939, with *Son of Frankenstein*, Boris Karloff decided he'd reached that point.

Jack Pierce remained in charge of the make-up, but James Whale had fallen out of favour with Universal bosses and was replaced by Rowland V. Lee. The Monster had regained his hair (burnt off in the mill), but had lost his newly acquired powers of

Going downhill. Boris backstage during Son of Frankenstein.

speech. Not even this could allay the actor's misgivings:

'They changed his clothes completely, wrapping him up in furs and muck, and he just became nothing. He was going downhill. We had exhausted his possibilities. He was becoming a clown.'³⁷

Once made, Boris stuck firmly by his decision. He donned the make-up only twice more: for a 1940 all-star charity baseball game in which the Monster hit a home run, tapping the ball and pounding his way round the bases while the infielders — who included Buster Keaton and the Three Stooges — pretended to faint in terror at his approach: and again in 1962 for an episode of CBS's *Route 66* which also boasted Peter Lorre as Dracula and Lon Chaney Jnr as Quasimodo, the Mummy and the Wolf Man.

The asphalt treader's boots were filled by Lon Chaney Jnr for *The Ghost of Frankenstein*, Bela Lugosi in *Frankenstein Meets the Wolf Man* and Glenn Strange in *House of Frankenstein*, *House of Dracula* and *Abbott and Costello Meet Frankenstein*, but there only ever was, and only ever will be, one Frankenstein's Monster.

'I owe him so much'³⁸, Karloff said of his 'dear old Monster'. It fuelled a fine career that made the name of Boris Karloff synonymous with the horror film and kept him working right up to his death back home in England in 1969.

Chapter Seven

Relating to Your Make-up Artist

Fredric March and Charles Laughton

While Boris Karloff came to his monster more or less unknown, Fredric March already had an established career as a leading man on Broadway and in the cinema when he came to his. He was born Frederick McIntyre Bickel in Racine, Wisconsin in 1897. His grounding as an actor was in the theatre, and his performance as John Barrymore in the play *The Royal Family of Broadway* brought him to the attention of Jesse Lasky, head of production at Paramount, who offered March a long-term contract.

In 1931, the studio announced their production of Robert Louis Stevenson's novel *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, with March set to play the dual role. As the handsome, hard-working, morally pure Dr Jekyll, he was perfect casting, but what of the evil, bestial and corrupt Mr Hyde? It seems that March himself was nervous about this. In particular, he was apprehensive about what the make-up might involve and that it would make him look silly. The man with the responsibility

for easing those fears was Wally Westmore.

The Westmores are an extraordinary dynasty of make-up artists, whose work very nearly spans the entire history of the cinema. The founder of the clan was George Westmore, another of those peripatetic Englishmen with which this narrative is becoming familiar. He was born on the Isle of Wight, where he opened his first barber shop in 1901 after serving in the British Army during the Boer War (he claimed to have discovered his 'genius' after cutting Winston Churchill's hair). He married his first wife, Ada, in the same year and the first member of the dynasty, Mont, arrived the following year. Ada would spend most of the rest of her young life pregnant, nursing or mourning: she died at the age of forty-three having borne nineteen children in twenty-one years, of which only seven survived.



Fredric March. After moving to the English mainland, George's wanderlust took him to several cities in Canada and the United States. Since he indulged a passion for watching movies at every opportunity, it was only a natural progression for his work and his hobby to combine, which it did when he settled his ever-growing family in Los Angeles in 1917. Of the surviving children, Perc

(pronounced purse'), Ern and Wally had been born in England, Dorothy arrived in Toronto, and Bud and Frank joined them in LA.

George was nothing if not a hustler, and lost no time in breaking into films by persuading the head of the Selig company that he could not make movies without a full-time, professional make-up artist. Thus Westmore had established the first ever studio make-up department within a year of arriving in Hollywood. The only problem with this was that Selig was only making 'jungle' movies, and combing the lion's mane was not entirely what George had imagined for himself. He responded by establishing a *second* make-up department at Triangle studios. Although Selig and Triangle both folded, George landed on his feet since they both became part of the new Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer studio.

He was soon in demand and opened his own shop, where his private customers included Mary Pickford, for whom he created false ringlets. Westmore's great speciality was hair, and wig-making in particular. Horrified by the wigs he saw actors using on the screen (he commented that all they lacked was the word 'Welcome'), he introduced the lace-based or 'ventilated' wig. What his grateful actresses would not have known was that his favourite outlet for the hair he used in his wigs and hairpieces was Big Suzy's French Whorehouse in Hollywood, with which establishment George seems to have enjoyed something more than simply a business relationship. The image of America's Sweetheart adorned by false ringlets made from cast-off prostitute's hair is a devastating piece of irony, be it conscious or not.

George passed his talents and secrets onto his sons; in the case of the twins Perc and Ern apparently by tying them to the table leg so that they could not escape. And every single one

of them entered the profession in one capacity or another. Mont became Head of Make-up at Selznick International, Perc at Warner Brothers, Ern at RKO and 20th Century Fox and Wally at Paramount, while Frank's credits include the 1956 version of *The Ten Commandments*, and Bud would replace Jack Pierce at Universal. Not satisfied with two generations, Mont's sons Michael and Mont Jnr also entered the business. Michael created the monster make-up for Canadian television's version of *Frankenstein*, and his other credits include *Rocky*, *Raging Bull*, *2010* and *Masters of the Universe*. He won an Oscar in 1986 for *Mask* and has had more than twenty Emmy nominations. Since the late eighties, he has been creating Vulcans, Klingons and assorted aliens and monsters for *Star Trek: The Next Generation* and *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine*.

Meanwhile back at Jekyll and Hyde! Fredric March's worries about the make-up may have been partly triggered by the suggestion of director Rouben Mamoulian that Mr Hyde's features should resemble those of Neanderthal Man. Taking up this suggestion, Wally Westmore undertook anthropological research and began making preliminary sketches of how Hyde might look. He kept March fully informed at each stage of the make-up's development, but did not create it directly on the actor's head,



The Westmores. Standing, left to right: Bud, Perc, Ern, Mont and Wally. Kneeling: Frank and Mont Jnr.

as Jack Pierce had done with Karloff. Instead, he took a route more familiar to me, creating a plaster-of-Paris mould of March's head and experimenting on that, building up the facial outline in soft clay and starting to create the lace-based wig which had to start unnaturally low down on his forehead.



His main problem was the false, fang-like teeth. We've already seen Lon Chaney using false teeth for his roles, but Lon had a major advantage: he didn't have to speak! Whatever Westmore designed not only had to be convincing and scary, and comfortable enough for March to live with for hours at a time, they also had to leave him able to speak his lines audibly. To solve the problem, Westmore enlisted the support of his own dentist, who delighted in the name of Dr Pincus. He studied the life-cast of March and then took a wax impression of his teeth. The result was a set of porcelain fangs, perfect in every respect except that, for some reason, they

Fredric March as Mr Hyde.

did not fit March's mouth properly. March now had no choice but to put in the hours in the chair while Pincus modified the fangs.

When make-up, wig and teeth were put together, everybody was delighted with the finished image. Mamoulion saw exactly what he had imagined, and ridiculous was the last response March was likely to encounter — as he quickly discovered.

The four hour long application of the make-up was always undertaken on the Paramount lot, even when the movie was shooting on location, and studio bosses insisted that Wally take personal responsibility for driving their star. So it was that early one morning, somewhere between Hollywood and Pasadena, Westmore drove into a gas station to check his route. Perhaps he forgot for a moment that March was in full make-up and costume as Mr Hyde. The attendant, approaching the car, took one look at the occupant of the passenger seat, screamed and fled. According to his brother Frank, 'Wally often wondered whether that poor man ever tried to tell anyone about what he had seen... at seven-thirty one sober morning in 1931.'

I have had a few such encounters myself, and although they're fun to look back on, I have to say I found them extremely uncomfortable at the time. These moments can even be dangerous. I have been told that a motorist was killed after going off the road, his attention caught by a car full of monkeys driving past. The monkeys were in fact actors on their way to location for *Planet of the Apes*.

Wandering around the corridors of Pinewood Studios in full make-up and costume in between shots during *Hellraiser II*, I inadvertently terrified a cleaner. I only hope she asked to be transferred to a different block, because we never saw her again. On that movie I also emerged from my dressing room and nearly collided with film critic Barry Norman, who rather sheepishly explained that he

was looking for his raincoat. In that particular encounter, however, I couldn't swear who frightened who more.

In Los Angeles in 1992 for the opening of *Hellraiser III*, I agreed to do some publicity appearances as Pinhead. We used to put the make-up on in a room of the Beverly Hills hotel I was staying in. Being Beverly Hills, of course, everyone was always very laid back about having Pinhead wandering around the hotel, but on one occasion, as we were on our way down to the lobby, the elevator stopped at the second floor, the doors hissed open and I found myself face to face with a regular, besuited, attach^e-case-carrying business man. He stared for a moment, dropped his case and walked back across the corridor muttering 'Oh my God.' I was about to say something by way of explanation which would probably only have made matters worse, when the doors closed and off we went again. Paul Jones (my make-up artist) and I imagined him going home and telling his kids, 'Hey, guess who I saw in the hotel this morning...' 'Yeah, sure, Dad. And that's really Mickey Mouse in Disneyland.'

Fredric March's concern and patience paid off for him. His performance won him the first of his two Oscars. March's success in the role was perhaps also helped by the fact that, like Karloff and Pierce, he and Wally Westmore clearly established a close and trusting working relationship. The same could emphatically not be said of my next subjects.

Born in England in 1899, Charles Laughton trained at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts, established himself almost immediately as a star of London's West End stage and made a similar impact on Broadway. As he was about to return to England, a telegram reached him from Jesse Lasky, offering

him a three year contract at Paramount. He would make two films a year and could choose his own roles. Laughton accepted the offer and his Hollywood career began.

His first Hollywood picture, *The Old Dark House* in 1932, was in fact for Universal (he was 'lent' by Paramount because of delays in preparing his first script) which united him with both James Whale and Boris Karloff. He continued to travel between Hollywood and the West End throughout the thirties before accepting RKO's offer of the part of Quasimodo.

The conventional wisdom about Laughton is of a brilliant actor who tended towards the hammy; an actor who yearned to be a conventional leading man but was trapped inside an unattractive face and body; a married man who was unable to come to terms with his homosexuality, and who poured the strains and agonies of these contradictions into his most memorable performances. On this reading, it would be difficult to see his immersion in the role of Quasimodo as anything other than an exercise in self-abasement. And yet Laughton's Quasimodo is oddly self-possessed, almost at ease with his ugliness and deformity.



Charles Laughton. Great Britain declared war on Nazi Germany during the making of the film and

events in Europe cast a shadow over filming. They were clearly present in Laughton's thoughts, as witness this memory of director William Dieterle, who was born in Germany:

'... the tension on the soundstage was unbearable. The scene in which Quasimodo rings the bell for Esmerelda, high in the bell tower... developed into something so powerful, that everybody including myself forgot that we were shooting a film... I forgot to call cut' [and] Laughton went on ringing the bells after the scene was really over. Finally, completely exhausted, he stopped. Nobody was able to speak, nobody moved. It was an unforgettable thing. Charles could only say: "I couldn't think of Esmerelda at all. I could only think of the poor people... going to fight that bloody, bloody war! To arouse the world, to stop that terrible butchery! Awake! Awake! That's what I felt when I was ringing the bells"²

Whatever else Charles was or wasn't, a perfectionist he most certainly was. Approaching Quasimodo in the kind of atmosphere just described, he was not going to be in the mood for any kind of compromise, and the creation of the make-up was clearly going to be central to the whole endeavour. To tackle the job, RKO 'bought in' Perc Westmore from Warner Brothers. Perc was no less hard-headed and bloody-minded than his star ('ten kinds of a swine'³ is the verdict of Laughton's biographer, Simon Callow) and from day one the two men developed a warm hatred for each other. The tone seemed to be set when Perc tried to convince Charles that the Westmores were descended from English nobility. Laughton, seeing right through the pretence, informed him, 'You're so full of shit even your eyes are brown.'⁴

Arguments began as soon as they discussed even the weight of the hump. In Chapter Five, I pointed out that there has always been much disagreement — and almost certainly much exaggeration — as to the precise weight of

Lon Chaney's hump. Frank Westmore, the family biographer, goes with 40lbs. By 1939, more malleable and lightweight materials were being pioneered, largely by Perc himself. He pointed this out to Laughton, suggesting that he could sculpt a hump out of sponge rubber that would give the impression of immense weight but need weigh no more than a few pounds. A reasonable point, perhaps, but Laughton was having none of it: if 40lbs was good enough for Lon Chaney, 401bs and not an ounce less was what Charles Laughton would carry. Perc pursued his point: why make life difficult for yourself? Why not just imagine the bulk? Why not just *act* as if you're in agony? Bad move, Perc. Of all the actors he could have chosen to say that to, Laughton should probably have been at the bottom of the list. He was outraged that a mere 'hired hand', as he called him, should presume to reduce his noble endeavours to mere *acting*. With Westmore close behind, he set off to seek out producer Pandro S. Berman and demand Peres immediate sacking.

The row continued in Berman's office. Laughton, accusing Westmore of 'abysmal stupidity and lack of talent'⁵, explained his vision of Quasimodo to his producer thus: 'I must look like a pig with a very heavy hump on its back.'⁶ If Westmore had any intention of building bridges in this relationship, his response would not appear to indicate it. 'Don't worry, Mr Laughton,' he replied, 'you look like a pig *without* a hump on your back.'⁷ Somehow, Berman managed to calm the situation down. No one was fired, and he suggested to Charles that he might like to return to England for a few weeks while preparations continued.

Before Laughton left Hollywood, Perc made several life-casts of his face which he darkly referred to as the actor's

'death masks.'⁸ He now proceeded to produce perhaps as many as a dozen different takes on Quasimodo's features. Unfortunately, there seems to be no record of what these looked like, or whether Westmore was playing with his own ideas or was working with Dieterle or how much input Laughton had already had. We do know that it took Laughton only a matter of minutes to reject every single one of them on his return to Los Angeles.



Unlikely though it might seem, a version was finally achieved with which all parties were happy. Precise details of the make-up are sketchy, and photographs are rare. Like Chaney's 1923 version, it remains pretty close to Victor Hugo's original description (Was this the heart of Laughton's objections? Was Westmore departing too far from the novel for his liking?), though it strikes me as a *cleaner*, more bathetic, even sentimental vision of Quasimodo. Westmore had created a mechanism to allow the false eye just below the actor's own right eye to blink which, in the days before radio control and animatronics, was a brilliant piece of miniature engineering.

He constructed a tiny copper bridge to sit on the bridge of Laughton's nose and support the glass eye. This eye had been fitted with a moveable copper eyelid, which was covered in

Charles Laughton as Quasimodo.

latex and painted. To this, a slender thread of catgut was fixed, run through the bridge and then attached to Laughton's own (hidden) eyelid in such a way that when Laughton blinked, so did the false eye. All the audience sees, of course, is a pair of grotesquely misshapen and misaligned eyes which blink perfectly naturally.

Laughton failed to add his voice to the general chorus of approval for Perc Westmore's work. With an *average* temperature of 100 degrees throughout shooting, Laughton suffered badly under the make-up. For Westmore, however, he was clearly not suffering enough, and he exacted one last petty revenge which, no matter how much the star may have invited it, does Westmore no credit at all. Since he deliberately took his young brother Frank along with him as a witness, I should let him tell the story:

'When I arrived at the studio... Perc was waiting for me. In his hands he held the 61b hump...'

61bs, eh? So Westmore won that battle!

'He told me that in order to put on the hump, with its complicated arrangement of straps to hold it in place on Laughton's back, the dignified actor had to get down on all fours. "He sweats," Perc said unkindly, "like the pig he is, and he grunts like one, and the whole process makes him very thirsty..."

'The actor was slumped on a long black couch holding his head between his hands. [He] looked at me balefully and... said, "I've got a toothache." But he didn't tell me to go.

Laughton got off the couch and dropped to his hands and knees... For the first time I noticed that [Perc] was carrying a bottle of quinine water. As he began to put on the hump, sure enough, Laughton started to sweat... Without looking up, he said, "Give me a drink, Perc."

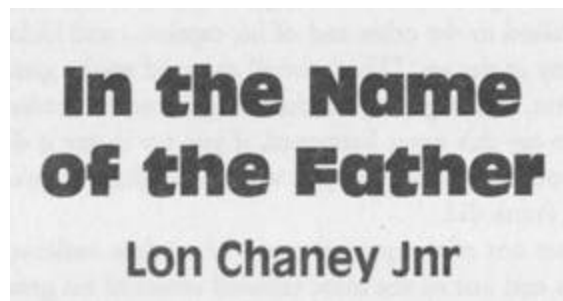
"Yes, Mr Laughton," said my brother. Deliberately he squatted down right in front of Laughton's face and vigorously began to shake that bottle of quinine water...

and he shot the whole fizzy bottleful right into the face of one of England's most distinguished actors. For good measure, Perc then stood up, walked to the other end of his captive... and kicked him squarely in the ass. "That's for all the grief you've given me," said Perc. "I brought my brother today because I needed a witness to say this never happened, if you try to say it did. But you won't, Mr Laughton, you won't." Laughton didn't."

But Frank did.

To see one of the great pioneers of modern make-up techniques and one of the most talented actors of his generation carrying on like this may be an unedifying spectacle, but it has to be acknowledged that out of this warfare a great performance in a great movie was created. It is far superior to the 1923 film, not least because it had a more talented director at the helm. Allowing that Chaney was working without the benefit of sound, there is no doubt that Charles Laughton created the definitive Quasimodo.

Laughton and Westmore never worked together again.



A

t first glance, it would seem straightforward that the son of Lon Chaney, familiar with his fathers work and bitten by the acting bug, would follow the .paternal footsteps into horror films and make-up roles. Life, however, is seldom that simple and in the case of Lon Chaney Jnr, it was much, much more complicated. His father did his best to prevent him getting into movies and was also determined that whatever his son achieved in life, it would be as a result of his own efforts and not because his father happened to be rich and famous.

Chapter Eight For the first several years of Lon Jnr's life, of course, his father was a very long way from being either of these. His arrival in the world as Creighton Tull Chaney in 1906 I have already described in Chapter Five. He was born prematurely, weighing less than 3lbs and, so the story goes, was plunged into the icy waters of Belle Isle Lake on the outskirts of Oklahoma City by the doctor who was worried he was not going to survive.

His early years were spent on the road with his parents. Creighton would later recount that his father would improvise a hammock slung over the dressing-room table for the baby, or else he slept in a cotton-lined shoebox. One or other of his parents would race backstage whenever they could to check on him. He also spoke movingly of one Christmas Eve when his parents were literally down to their last twenty-five cents. Putting most of it in the gas meter, Lon then took Creighton with him to a saloon where he sat his son on the bar and then set about persuading the pianist to play some tune he could dance to. He might earn a few more pennies, but the real purpose was to act as a decoy while his son filled his pockets with sandwiches!



'Do you know what else he did when we got home? After I was asleep, he went out, broke a limb off a park tree, fixed it in a box in our room, and spent the whole night making tree decorations out of a roll of red crepe paper he had bought with a few pennies.'

This hardly sounds like the behaviour of the tyrannical father Lon is sometimes portrayed as having been. When he was granted custody of his son following his divorce from Clevea, Lon placed Creighton in a home for the children of divorce

Lon Chaney Jnr.

and disaster, working through the week and visiting him on Sundays. Nearly two years later, Lon married Hazel Hastings and Creighton immediately went to join them in the first proper home of his life. He travelled to the studio with his father sometimes, and may have accompanied him on publicity tours, but Lon's determination to keep Creighton out of the business and from thinking of himself as a movie star's son remained absolute. When Creighton was a student at Hollywood High (studying alongside Fay Wray and Joel McCrea), Lon refused to buy his son a car. It was common for Hollywood High students to earn a bit of pocket money by working as extras in the movies at weekends and during holidays, but when Creighton approached his father to discuss his desire to get into acting, Lon's response was to whisk him out of High School and enrol him in business college.

Dutifully, Creighton knuckled under. By 1930, aged twenty-four, he was married to Dorothy, had two sons, Lon III and Ronald, and was working for the General Water Heater Corporation. He seemed to be on his way to becoming the settled family and business man his father wanted. But by the end of that year, his father was dead. Having determined not to give his son an easy start, Lon was also determined he would not benefit from his death. The money he left to Creighton ensured that he would have to carry on working for his living.

Not that Creighton responded to his father's death by burning his business suits and racing into the movies. Far from it, in fact. He plugged away for another couple of years and even then only made his break into movies by accident and after a false start. Some friends of his late father invited him to a party where he sang a song he had written. Someone suggested he should take it to the studio music department:

'When I went to the studio, I had to pass through the casting office. The casting director looked at me and said,

"You're Lon Chaney's son. You ought to be in pictures!"... "How about it?" I asked. He told me he'd have a job for me in a couple of days.'² Home went Creighton, quit his job, and waited anxiously for the phone to ring. It didn't. However, the same man who'd admired his song took him to meet the casting director at RKO and Creighton Chaney was in the movies. The studio naturally wanted to sign Lon Chaney Jnr, but at this stage, Creighton refused:

'As I see it now, I was foolish. I'd have gotten ahead much faster if I had. But I didn't feel I was entitled to take my father's name. I didn't feel I was an actor yet.'³

What followed was nearly two years of riding the range in a succession of serial and B-movie Westerns, which led him to quit RKO out of frustration. He knew he had more to offer than this, but how to convince the folk who mattered? He even went to acting class, only to have the tutor tell him, 'You know as much about all this as I do'⁴ and invite him to help with the teaching!

Divorced, remarried, and getting perilously close to broke, he finally took the step he had resisted for so long — 'Why? Because they starved me into it.'⁵ — and at the end of 1937 Lon Chaney Jnr signed for 20th Century Fox. This, he must have thought, was finally it. It wasn't. The parts he got were no better. He courted RKO again, and screen-tested to reprise his father's role in *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, only to see the part go to some English guy with an attitude problem.

The break which would finally establish his name came by another stroke of good fortune. A Los Angeles theatre was about to go into rehearsals with an adaptation of John Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men*. Broderick Crawford, cast to play Lenny, was forced to pull out, and Chaney replaced him. The

play was a hit, and when United Artists decided to film the novel, he got the part. The film was a great success and Chaney had finally arrived as an actor in his own right. It must have been gratifying for Lon to know that

he had achieved success in a role very far removed from the kind of characters with which his father had made his name. Even so, things still did not run smoothly. He was offered more minor roles and 'Lenny-like' parts which did not suit, and just a year after making *Of Mice and Men* he found himself out of contract and with no prospects.

Fortune was once again manipulating the plot, however. Boris Karloff's final performance as the Monster in *Son of Frankenstein* in 1939 had been a huge success and, determined to capitalise on it, Universal were looking for new names to join their established horror stars. Who better than The Son of the Man of a Thousand Faces? So, in 1940, Lon Chaney Jr signed up with Universal.

His first horror movie was *Man Made Monster* in 1941, a mad scientist yarn originally intended for Karloff and Lugosi, which teamed him up with Lionel Atwill. The studio was not slow to herald their new name: 'New Horror Strikes The Screen!' shrieked the trailer, 'Brilliantly Portrayed By The Son Of The Master Of Horror!' That same year brought him the role with which he is forever associated, Larry Talbot, the ever-reluctant Wolf Man (Universal had apparently intended the role to go to Bela Lugosi, who appears in the film as Bela the gypsy, the werewolf who first infects Talbot and whom Talbot subsequently kills).

The Wolf Man was not Universal's first werewolf movie. The studio had announced the title in 1932 as a Karloff vehicle. It eventually surfaced in 1935 as *Werewolf of London*, with Henry Hull playing the lycanthropic Dr Glendon. Jack Pierce

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was, of course, responsible for creating the make-up. His favoured design was rejected, possibly because of its lengthy application time, or because Hull disliked the fact that it eradicated all his own features. When

the new *WolfMan* came his way, Pierce revived his original plan and this time it was accepted, with no complaints from Chaney.

Pierce's fundamental problem was a basic one: what does a werewolf look like? The Monster had a literary source and the Mummy a historical one, but there was no objective starting point this time. Rather quaintly, Pierce tried to find one:

'I combed numerous histories of England without finding a practical description of a werewolf. About all I learned was that the legend began, and still persists, among the people of

Jack Pierce applies the Wolf Man make-up.



Wales who live around the ancient castles ['the deserted castles of Scotland' in another quote, so he'd covered three-quarters of the United Kingdom]. Sometimes the wind produces sounds like the howling of wolves. Apparently the werewolf legend started with these noises.'⁶ 'Since no one had ever seen one, I just sat down and tried to figure out how a werewolf ought to look.'⁷

Hairy was apparently the answer. Pierce created a snout-like, rubber nose which was glued in place, but the rest of the makeup was yak hair, specially imported for the job. This was applied, according to Pierce, hair by hair, but I wonder whether there wasn't a separate wig with just the facial hair being applied in this way. The hair was then 'singed to give it that wild, unkempt look'⁸, which sounds like an interesting moment for Chaney since this seems to have been done *after* the hair had



Lon Chaney Jr as the Wolf Man.

been applied. Pierce also provided hairy claws for hands and feet. If you've ever thought it odd that the Wolf Man always wore a shirt buttoned up to the neck and down to the wrists, think of the time, money and pain saved by not having to make up the whole body in this manner. With a set of fangs to round things off, the whole application took about five hours.

I wonder how often Lon thought about his father during the long hours in the make-up chair. With mixed feelings, too, if this slightly tongue-in-cheek recollection of screenplay writer Curt Siodmak is any guide:

'Of course, I had access to the set... but I didn't like to go there. Lon wanted to kill me! He was angry because it took five or six hours to [get] into the... make-up, and an hour to take it off; he couldn't talk in the make-up, and he had to eat through a straw. Chaney said, "If I find the s-o-b who made up this monster, I'm gonna hit him over the head!"'⁹

Which, you may think, is fairly articulate for someone who couldn't speak. But these privations were as nought compared with what he went through to film the movie's climactic transformation of the Wolf Man back into Larry Talbot, which Chaney himself recalled, but in rather confusing detail.

He says he 'came in at 2am"', presumably arriving at the studio to start the make-up at that time, which would have had him ready to go on set by about 7am. I would guess that they would have started with the Wolf Man's death, telling Lon to hold his final pose:

'When I hit that position they would take little nails and drive them through the skin at the edge of my fingers, on both hands, so that I wouldn't move them anymore. While I was in this position, they would build a plaster cast of the back of my head.'¹

By this I assume they were creating a pair of 'wedges', precisely recording the position of his head, so it could be accurately repeated for each shot. Similarly, a very precise eyeline was established so that his eyes did not move from shot to shot. And surely those nails were being placed at the *edges* of his fingers and hands? I could be wrong, but I have serious doubts about this Lilliputian image of the actor being physically nailed to the floor of the soundstage. While all this was going

on, the camera crew were weighting the camera — with one ton, said Lon — so that it remained unaltered in relation to the actor. With all this in place, they could begin the tedious, time-consuming process of shooting the transformation:

'... they would shoot five or ten frames of film in the camera. They'd take that film out and send it to the lab. While it was there the make-up man would come and take the whole [make-up] off my face, and put on a new one, only less... When the film came back from the lab they'd check me. They'd say, "Your eyes have moved a little bit, move them to the right... now your shoulder is up..." Then they'd roll again and shoot another ten frames.'¹²

I'm nit-picking if I point out that ten frames of film is less than half a second of screen time, so they must certainly have been shooting a lot more than that, but Chaney's account gives a clear indication of how laborious this process was. The actor claimed twenty-one make-up changes in twenty-two hours and added, 'I won't even discuss about the bathroom!'³

Video assist (which records everything the camera sees on videotape for instant playback) and Polaroid photographs would remove the need to have the film developed between each shot nowadays, but the removal and re-application of make-up is as time-consuming now as it was fifty years ago. And on a low-budget horror film today, you'd be very unlikely to have the luxury of having that much time to devote to such a sequence. Pinhead's transformation from Cenobite to human in *Hellraiser II* was planned in several stages with most of a day devoted to it. However, we wound up filming it in a rush, late in the day, with half the stages dropped.

The Wolf Man was released shortly before Christmas 1941, with the publicity department in full flow: 'NIGHT MONSTER! Prowling... Killing... Terrifying A Countryside! HIS

HIDEOUS HOWL A DIRGE OF DEATH! Not A "Thing" — But A Mortal Man — A LIVING Horror — With Its Unearthly Body A Twitching Tomb Of Strange Desires!' Critical response was mixed. The *New York Times* declared this Living Horror to be 'a lot less terrifying and not nearly as funny as Mr Disney's Big, Bad Wolf.'⁴ *Variety* found Chaney's performance 'competent', while *The Hollywood Reporter* said that he bore 'favourable comparison with his esteemed father.'⁶ The public were much more certain, turning *The Wolf Man* into a \$1,000,000 hit.

Universal were now planning *The Ghost of Frankenstein*. Boris Karloff made his decision not to play the Monster again all the more dramatic by 'defecting' to Broadway to play Jonathan Webster in *Arsenic and Old Lace*. Audiences were treated to Karloff explaining why he killed Mr Spengler with the line, 'He said I looked like Boris Karloff!' Boris played the part for eighteen months — the show ran for three and a half years — before going on a sixty-six week tour with it. He later described it as 'one of the happiest periods of my life.' So much the better for Bela Lugosi, you might assume, who now appeared to have the horror field to himself. But he had to be content with reprising his Ygor role, while studio chiefs turned to Chaney to play the Monster.

This was a thankless task. Having come to terms with the legacy of being his father's son (Universal dropped the 'Jnr' from his billing for this film), he now had to match up to Karloff who was looked on as little short of saintly by just about everybody at Universal. Nobody admired Karloff more than Jack Pierce. Unfortunately, where Boris was easy-going and patient to a fault with the rigours of the make-up, Chaney was short-tempered and had gained a little arrogance with his new found stardom. He seems to have had an allergic reaction

to the greasepaint which forced him to take a week off. Later, he became so irritated by the rubber headpiece that he tore it off, tearing the flesh on his forehead with it and invaliding himself out of the picture again.



Publicity still for *The Mummy's Tomb*. Chaney had another, self-inflicted cross to bear, which was becoming more and more difficult to conceal. All his adult life, he had been a heavy drinker, and by now was an alcoholic, drinking throughout the day from a hip flask. He once advised a director, 'Get everything you can out of me before Ipm because after that I can't guarantee anything'¹⁸, while Charles Barton, the director of *Abbott and Costello Meet Frankenstein* recalled,

'By late afternoon, he didn't know where he was.'¹⁹ It might help to explain why his memory of the transformation sequence seems a little unreliable. It was also sadly the cause of him humiliating himself on live national television. He played the Monster in 1952 with a make-up not dissimilar to Robert De Niro's 1994 version. Unfortunately, he got drunk before the telecast and played the whole performance in the belief that it was the final rehearsal!

While Chaney's performance is unquestionably inferior to Karloff's, and despite all the problems, the film performed well and

Chaney was given some favourable reviews. Enough for Universal to cast him in *The Mummy's Tomb*, the third film in the series, Tom Tyler having taken over from Karloff for *The Mummy's Hand*. The brilliance of Pierces original make-up had now given way to a far less effective rubberised mask which seems to have caused his allergy to return.

In 1943, Chaney recreated the role of Larry Talbot in *Frankenstein Meets the Wolf Man*, which contrasts Talbot's search for death and release from his curse with the Monster's will to live. There was apparently some talk of having Lon play both roles, an astonishing proposal given the amount of make-up involved. Not surprisingly, the idea was not pursued and, instead, Bela Lugosi finally played the part he had rejected twelve years earlier. This was no easy task for Bela. He turned sixty during shooting, his health was failing, and he found the long hours and the physical demands of the makeup more than he could tolerate. Stuntman Eddie Parker, who had doubled for Chaney in *The Ghost of Frankenstein* and *The Mummy's Tomb*, was put on permanent standby in full makeup to take over from Bela if things got too much for him. To add insult to injury, when rushes were screened, it suddenly struck everybody as funny that the Monster had a Hungarian accent. (Wouldn't you think they'd have thought of all this before casting Lugosi?) So all the Monster's dialogue was cut out, which included all references to him being blind; the result being that Bela's hesitant, groping movements look merely ludicrous.

By contrast, Chaney gave one of his best performances as Talbot, and was back the following year for *The House of Frankenstein* (following outings as Count Alucard in *Son of Dracula* and donning the bandages again for *The Mummy's Ghost*). If two monsters makes for good box-office, Universal

seemed to be reasoning, what might five monsters do? Here, alongside Chaney's Wolf Man and Glenn Strange's Monster, they added Boris Karloff's Mad Doctor, John Carradine's Dracula and J. Carroll Naish's Hunchback.

The Mummy's Curse was followed by another monster reunion in *House of Dracula*, which shuffled the pack to the extent of featuring Onslow Stevens' Mad Doctor and Jane Adams as a hunchbacked Nurse. The publicity hype for these movies was growing ever more hysterical, probably in inverse proportion to their quality. But on they wound, with Abbott and Costello meeting Frankenstein in 1948 and bumping into the Wolf Man along the way. Chaney apparently doubled as the Monster when Glenn Strange injured a leg!

But this was the end of Lon Chaney's success. Universal dropped him, largely because of his excessive drinking, and he existed on a steady diet of B pictures, with only a few high points such as his supporting role in *High Noon*, as the old Sheriff who turns down Gary Cooper's request for help. He returned to Universal in 1952 to team up with Karloff in *The Black Castle*, but the general momentum was all downhill. By the sixties the long years of alcohol abuse were taking their toll with a whole slew of serious illnesses, including a brush with his father's nemesis, throat cancer. He died of a heart attack on Friday 13 July 1973.

The image shows the front cover of a book. The title 'Meanwhile, on the Other Side of the World' is printed in a large, bold, black serif font, centered on the upper half of the cover. Below the title, the author's name 'Jean Marais' is printed in a smaller, black serif font, also centered. The background of the cover is a light, textured grey.

Meanwhile, on the Other Side of the World

Jean Marais

While all these various Universal monsters were careering around Hollywood, bumping into each other and assorted comedians and meeting in each other's houses, something very different was happening in France. Stevenson's evil Mr Hyde erupting out of the placid Dr Jekyll, and the bloodthirsty Wolf Man taking over the mind and body of poor Larry Talbot are clearly distant cousins. Both attempt to portray the notion of a darker side to human nature, which we may attempt to disown or suppress: the beast in man. In psychological terms, they correlate to the Freudian unconscious or the Jungian Shadow (the latter usually symbolised in animal form).

Chapter Nine

Occupying a branch of the same family tree is the character I want to look at next: the Beast, played by Jean Marais, in *La Belle et la Bete* (*Beauty and the Beast*) directed by Jean Cocteau. This, one of the most visually beautiful films ever made, is clearly not a horror film; rather we have moved into the world of fairy tales and the Brothers Grimm.

the world of fairy tales and the Brothers Grimm.

Marais was born Jean Marais-Villain in 1913, and had an unhappy childhood. His mother gave birth to him just a few days after the death of her only daughter and, overwhelmed with grief, she would have nothing to do with the baby. Since his father was called up to fight in the First World War when Marais was only a toddler, Jean had no conscious memory of him. When his father returned home four years later, Jean saw him as an interloper and demanded to know who this 'dumbbell' was who kept pestering" him. His father's response was to beat him, and his mother promptly packed herself, Jean and his two brothers off to live with his grandmother. Jean idolised his mother. When he discovered that she was a compulsive shoplifter, his response was to go with her and act as her look-out to ensure she would not be caught! She introduced him to the cinema and may have helped to plant the desire to act. Jean would later say that he couldn't remember a time when he didn't want to be an actor.



Jean Marais. Expelled from High School for dressing up as a girl and attempting to seduce a teacher, he nearly shot himself with a loaded revolver

at the age of fourteen. He worked as a photographer's assistant before enrolling in acting classes, taking bit-part and extra work in films to help pay the fees.

Marais's life was changed forever in 1937 when Cocteau visited his drama school to check rehearsals for his unperformed short play *Oedipe Roi* (*Oedipus Rex*). The poet fell in love with the actor, cast him in his own production of the play and initiated a twenty-five year relationship of love and work between the two men.

The range of Cocteau's talents is almost impossible to chronicle: any list simply seems to embrace every medium that was on offer during his life. Poet, playwright, screenplay writer, novelist, diarist, journalist, actor, illustrator, artist, director (stage and screen), designer, librettist, ballet scenarist, even — bizarrely and briefly — would-be boxing manager. It is often suggested, sometimes sarcastically, that his life was his only great work of art, an opinion with which I think Cocteau would readily have agreed. He enjoyed playing the *enfant terrible*, his homosexuality and lifelong on-off addiction to opium kept him firmly outside conventional society, while he also had the happy knack — deliberate or otherwise — of creating a whiff of scandal around much of his work. He certainly never lost the chance to self-mythologise. Just four years before his death in 1963, he was contacted by a worried director who was preparing his ballet *The Poet and His Muse*. The dancer playing the Poet had injured his arm. Would Cocteau be willing to allow the role to be performed by a dancer with his arm in a sling? He telegraphed back, 'Of course. It is more Cocteau than Cocteau.'²

If he is open to the inevitable accusation of being a 'jack-of-all-trades' I would suggest that he was certainly master of one: the cinema. Apart from the early *Le Sang d'un Poète* (*Blood of a Poet*) and the late *Le Testament d'Orphée* (*Testament of Orpheus*), his cinematic output as

director consists of four films between 1946 and 1950. He wrote the screenplay for several others. Marais appeared in six of these and became something of a matinee idol in France (and, oddly, Tokyo, where 'Jean Marais' clubs were formed and he was dubbed 'The Most Beautiful Man in the World'), complete with groupies, as Marais himself recalled:

'Girls spent the night on my stairs, stood in crowds in the Rue Montpensier and in the Palais-Royal garden. We were watched every second. When I went out they would come with me, take the metro with me, leave it when I did, walk home with me and wait until I went out again. In the garden they sat in chairs, in rows, as though it were a theatre... Once in a while one of them would ring my bell and ask for an autograph or a few kind words. Sometimes I would lose my temper and shout at them to go away, insult them. Cocteau scolded me, telling me it was part of the profession I had chosen. I had asked for it and now I was getting it. Gradually I learned to be more patient.'³

Beauty and the Beast was the first film Cocteau had directed for sixteen years. According to Marais, he had nearly used the title for a different project:

'Jean Cocteau wrote a play which much later he called *L'Aigle a Deux Tetes* (*The Eagle Has Two Heads*). [First produced in London in 1946 and adapted and directed for the screen by Cocteau the following year, with Marais starring.] He was looking for a title for the new work and among those he mentioned was *La Belle et la Bete*. In my childhood, I was brought up on fairy tales, and I said, "No, Jean, don't call the play that because I have a dream that you will make a film on that subject."⁴

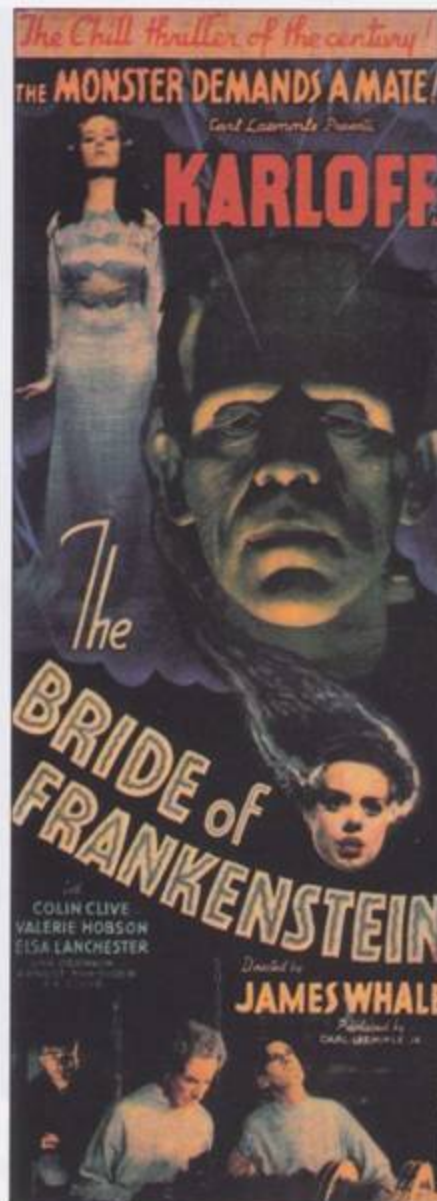


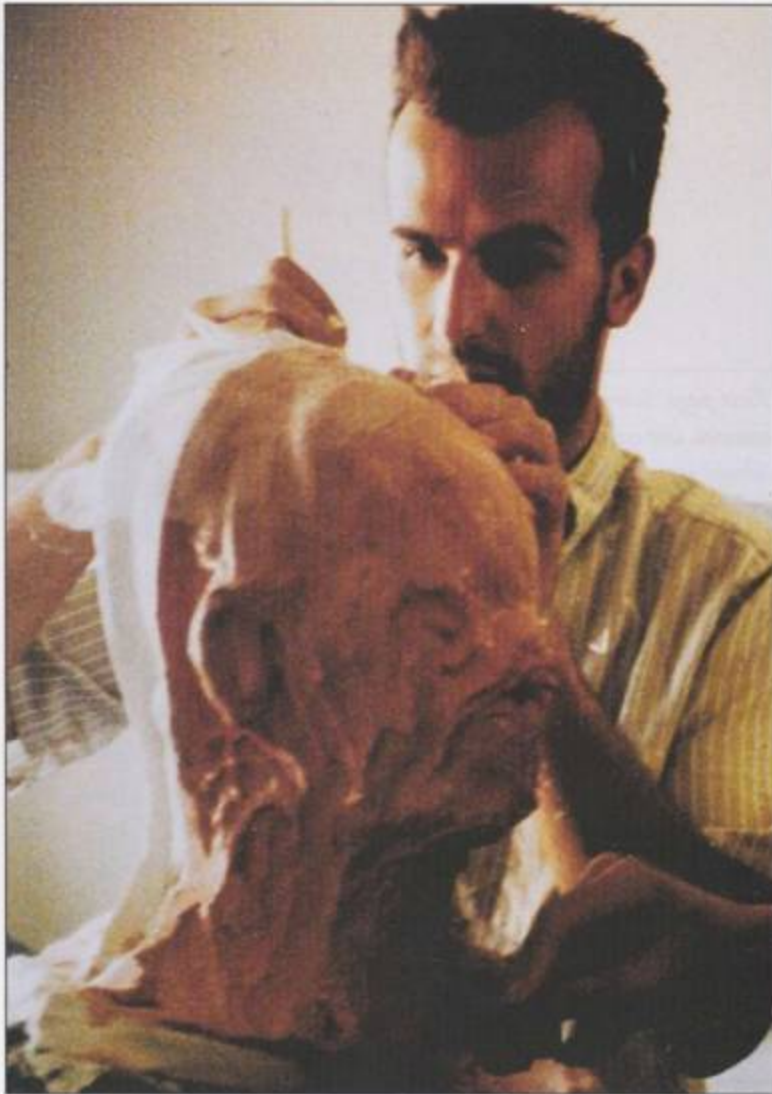


First page: Siberian shaman's costume, late eighteenth century. Almost every aspect has some significance. Note the smaller masks (helping spirits), the plaits and ribbons marking his ability to fly and the 'mirror' at his right shoulder, allowing him to see the future. And doesn't that mask remind you just a little of Leatherface?

Left: Mourner's dress from Tahiti, presented to Captain Cook on his second voyage (1772-75). It has remarkable correspondences with Pinhead's costume, but was absolutely not used as a conscious reference point. The mask is formed from pearl shells.

Right: Bride of Frankenstein.





Geoff Portass prepares to liberate me. Making the life-cast for Hellraiser, Shepperton Studios, London, 1986.



Behind the scenes, Hellbound: Hellraiser II. Pinewood Studios, London, 1988.

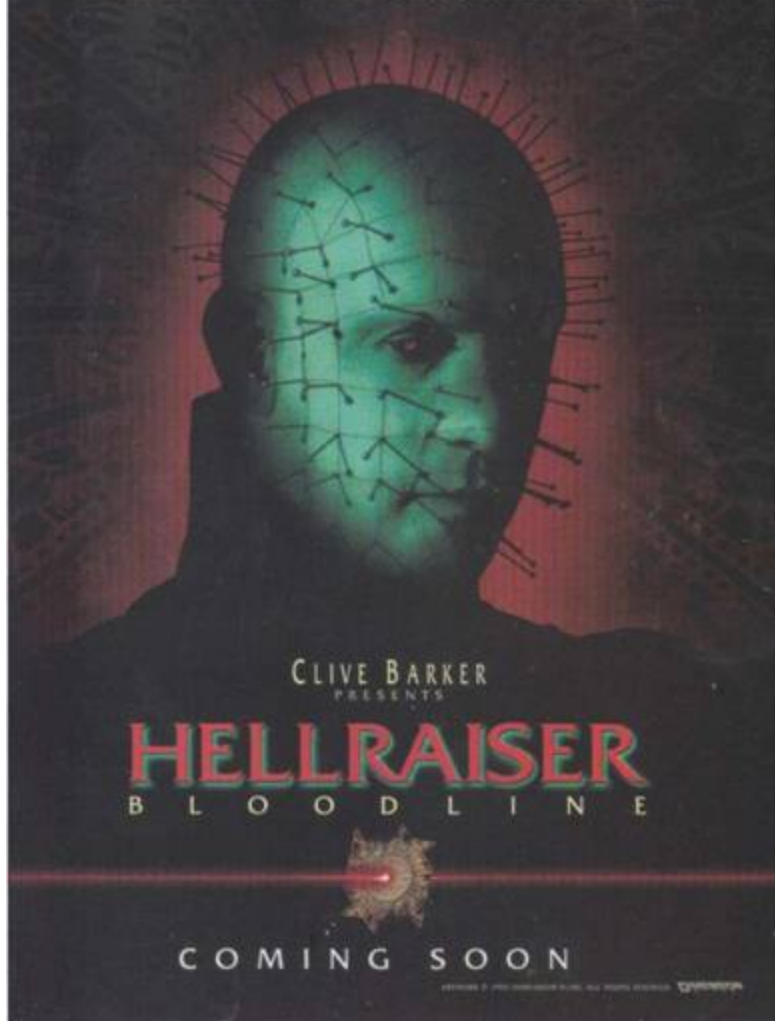


*Pinhead in the pillar of souls, Hellraiser III: Hell on Earth,
North Carolina, 1991.*



Hellraiser: Bloodline, Los Angeles, 1994.

THIS YEAR, THE PAST, THE PRESENT AND THE FUTURE
WILL ALL MEET AT THE CROSSROADS OF HELL.



CLIVE BARKER
PRESENTS

HELLRAISER

B L O O D L I N E

COMING SOON

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Making this film had been a long-standing desire of Cocteau's, but it was apparently Marais's suggestion that they should do it at this point after the long, dark years of the Second World War. His enthusiasm might not have been entirely unconnected to the fact that the film offered him a triple role as the Beast, Prince Charming (who wins Beauty because of her love for the Beast) and Avenant (whose protestations of love for Beauty are rejected at the start of the film).

Undertaking such a film in the aftermath of the war and France's occupation by Nazi Germany was no place for ego-trips, however. Filming began in August 1945, and Cocteau's own journal of the making of the film is an astonishing record of obstacles overcome. Everything was in short supply — Cocteau himself was receiving food parcels from friends in California, and when he was struck down by jaundice, severe eczema and gum disease during the shoot, he was reliant on shipments of penicillin from America. Materials for sets and costumes were hard to come by, and some were stolen as soon as acquired. Camera equipment was old and unreliable, as was their film stock. Electricity was liable to disappear without warning and with no promises as to when it might be restored.

Cocteau's approach to film-making was entirely idiosyncratic and far from conventional. He confided to his diary:

'I am not a real director and probably never shall be. I get too interested in what is happening. I begin to watch the action as though it were a play. I become a part of the audience and then I forget all about the continuity.'⁵

He was besotted with the magical possibilities cinema offered; the ability to make illusion real. He seldom resorted to 'special effects'. Most of his tricks were created in the camera in real time, and certainly contribute to the dream-like quality of *Beauty and the Beast*. He constantly

employed reverse motion. Thus, when Beauty and Prince Charming fly into the air at the end of the film, it's a reverse shot of the actors jumping downwards, and the movements of Josette Day's dress in reverse create an extraordinary sense of unreality. Her entrance into Beast's castle, with the row of real arms sprouting from the walls holding candelabra (an illusion copied many times, most notably in Roman Polanski's *Repulsion*) is another fine example. When the candles magically light themselves, it is a reverse motion shot of them being blown out. Consequently, they trail streams of smoke before suddenly bursting into flame. In one shot, you can see the flames in the fireplace burning downwards: for Cocteau, a perfect example of a 'mistake' contributing to poetry.

The problem of covering a human face with hair had been solved by Jack Pierce by gluing separate strands of hair to Lon Chaney Jnr's skin. The solution for Marais was simple and, I think, gives a far more satisfying result. How do you add false hair to an actor? Wigs, of course. And that is exactly what the Beast's 'mask' is: three separate 'ventilated' or lace-based wigs in the style pioneered by George Westmore. The first came down as far as his eyes, the second down to his upper lip, and the third from his mouth down to the base of his neck. Marais described the creation of the make-up and the crucial role played by his dog, Moulouk:

'I imagined the Beast with antlers, like a stag. It was Christian B[^]rard, a wonderful painter and designer of genius, who said that the Beast couldn't be a herbivore, he had to be a carnivore, and he was right. A herbivore wouldn't scare you.

'The producer was worried about a made-up actor playing the Beast. Jean Cocteau proposed a trial which would give us a better idea. Cocteau and I went to a very talented wig maker, Monsieur Pontet, who began by making a life-cast of my face, then on the cast he made a tulle and began to

make a wig in three parts which entirely covered the face and was glued onto it.'⁶

Marais as the Beast.



'He devoted a great deal of thought to how the mask could be given the look of my own face and not interfere with its own mobility... I often went to see him with Moulouk, and the dog taught us things: the unevenness and shagginess and spottiness of the fur that make it seem so alive are due to Moulouk.'⁷

Hence Cocteau's comment that only an actor with 'Marais's passion for his work and his devotion to his dog'⁸ could have played the role so convincingly. Pontet also provided a 'wig' for Marais to apply to the backs of his

hands for the scenes when he is not wearing Berard's magnificent gauntlets.

'It took me five hours to make up — that meant thirteen hours a day in the studio. Because of the fangs attached to my teeth, all I could eat was mush, and that by the spoonful. Between takes I scarcely dared open my mouth lest the makeup become unglued: no one understood what I said, and that exasperated me.'⁹

This last comment would seem to suggest that the false fangs left Marais unable to speak his lines clearly, but in his diary, Cocteau comments favourably on Marais's voice after watching rushes and makes no record of having to post-synch any of Marais's performance.

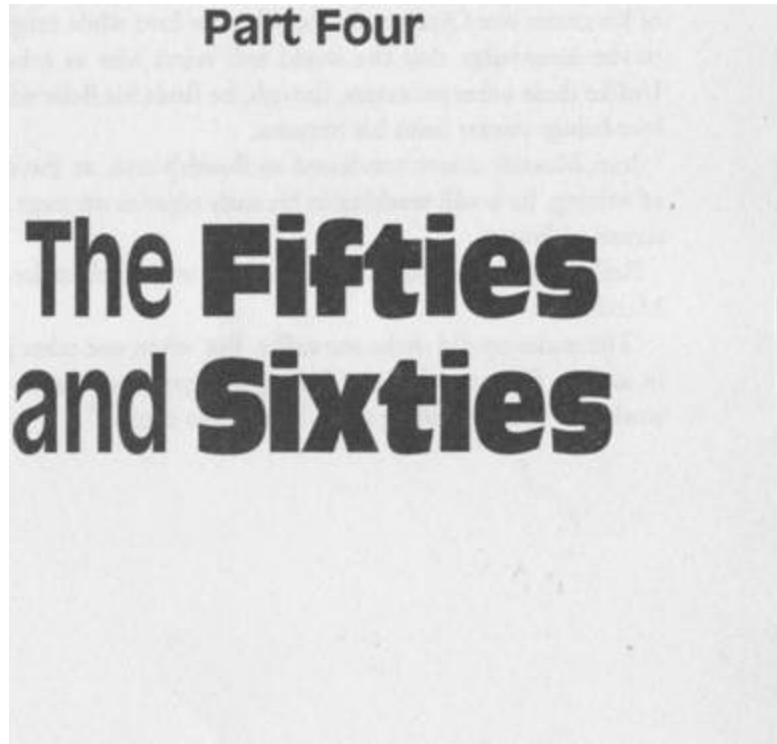
It has also been said that Cocteau himself applied Marais's make-up, but I am certain this is not the case. Cocteau makes no mention of this in his diary, and the actor's comments to me suggest if anything that he applied the wigs himself. This would be common practice for an actor using wigs, beards or moustaches in the theatre, but unusual in the cinema.

As I said earlier, Marais's Beast is emphatically not a horrific creation. It is literally a leonine vision: proud, wild and arrogant, but also filled with gentility-and nobility; the deep melancholy of the Prince locked inside the bestial form. Like the Frankenstein Monster, he is trapped in a world which cannot understand him; like Lawrence Talbot, he longs to be rid of his curse; like Quasimodo, he aches for love while resigned to the knowledge that the world will reject him as a beast. Unlike these other monsters, though, he finds his Belle whose love brings release from his torment.

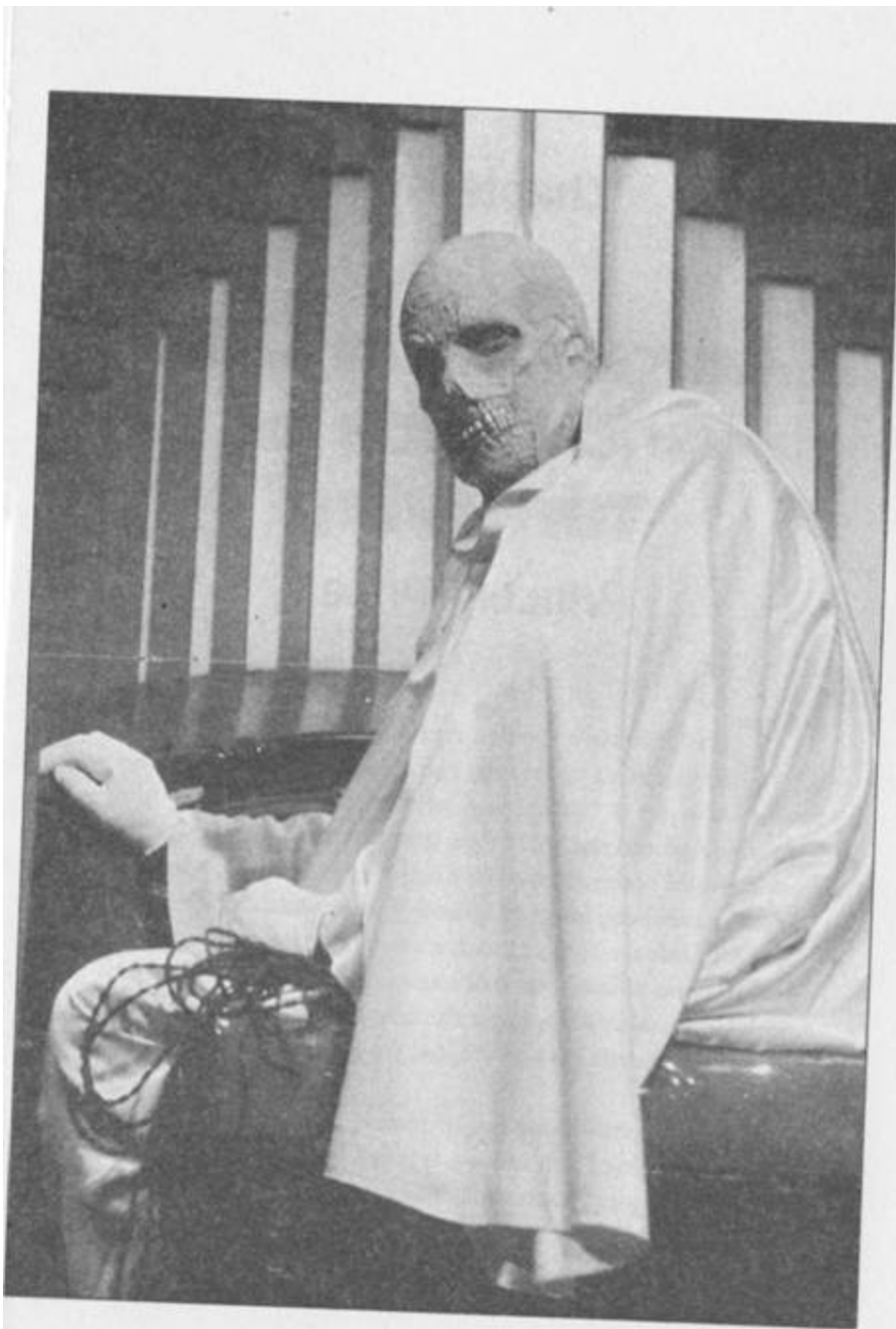
Jean Maraiss career continued to flourish and, at the time of writing, he is still working in his early eighties on stage and screen in France.

Reflecting on the demands of working with such make-up, Marais says:

'The make-up did make me suffer. But when one takes part in Such a film, one has the feeling that you must serve the work and you are willing to suffer for that cause.'"0



Vincent Price as Dr Phibes.



Larger Than Life and Twice as Terrifying

Vincent Price

With Universale Golden Age of monster-driven horror films having apparently exhausted every possible variation on a theme, and as the fifties ushered in the Atomic Age and the Space Age, it was perhaps inevitable that sci-fi would become the more dominant genre in this decade. It had never been away, of course; *Frankenstein* and *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* are both as much science fiction as they are horror. But the whole tone had changed dramatically. To stick with Universale catalogue for the sake of comparison, the first half of the decade gave us *It Came from Outer Space* and *This Island Earth*.

Chapter Ten

There were still monsters, of course, but they were a very different kettle of fish indeed, typified by *The Creature from the Black Lagoon*, successful enough to spawn two sequels, *Revenge of the Creature* and *The Creature Walks Among Us*. There were giant animals, too, exemplified by *Tarantula* and *The Deadly Mantis*. This was also the decade in which Japan

gave the peerless Godzilla to the world.

Attitudes to make-up were changing, too. The end of an era had well and truly arrived in 1947:

'It was no coincidence that Universal's classic monster films ended with *House of Dracula* in 1945. Once again, rumours of a new administration circulated around the lot. Having survived at Universal for more than twenty years, these rumours just bounced off Jack Pierce and his crew, but in November of 1946, Universal announced that it was merging with International Pictures. With this merger came yet another front office; this time lawyers and administrators, not film-makers...

'Word came down that there would be no more monsters [and] in 1947, to the disbelief of his entire make-up crew, Jack Pierce was fired and replaced by a make-up administrator, Bud Westmore."

In truth, new materials and methods were supplanting the painstaking techniques Pierce had always employed. His approach was also time-consuming and, as the accountants' grip closed ever more tightly around the studios, would no longer be tolerated. A constant innovator, he would certainly not fight shy of employing new materials, but with one major change he was entirely out of sympathy, and he knew it:

'About the only other new thing involved in monster creation is rubber. Personally, I don't like it, and use it only under protest. I prefer the simplest items of make-up, natural materials. The 'bone' of the Frankenstein Monster's ponderous forehead is built up with a special type of cotton, for instance.'²

Unfortunately for him, it was this one innovation which was to become dominant, almost to the exclusion of any other medium.

Jack Pierce wound up his career working on low-budget movies and in TV, his final job being on *Mister Ed* (the sitcom about the talking horse) in the early sixties. When

he died in 1968, only a handful of former colleagues attended his funeral.

Among the pioneers of the new make-up materials were two brothers, George and Gordon Bau. Born in Minnesota in the first decade of the century, they had both been employed by a Californian company called Rubbercraft which manufactured dolls and provided props and early prosthetic pieces for the movies. George is credited with creating the first, ultra-light- weight foam latex pieces described as a microporous, sponge rubber with tissue-thin edges that looked, felt and wrinkled like skin'³ and sounds no different from the pieces with which I have become so familiar.

We have already considered their work, in fact. The pair got their break into the film business when Rubbercraft seconded them to Warner Brothers to assist Perc Westmore in creating the prosthetic pieces for Charles Laughton's *Quasimodo*. It was their resins and talent that went to work on Vincent Price in 1953 for the same studios *House of Wax*.

The King of Leer, The Prince of Smirk, The Merchant of Menace (he seemed to specialise in attracting these punning sobriquets) was born in St Louis on 27 May 1911. He enjoyed 'a normal, well-adjusted childhood'⁴ and made his first acting appearance in the school Nativity play as an angel, but forgot all his lines. It was a move to London that led to a somewhat more successful dramatic career, but he was not drawn there by a desire to act, but by his first love, art. He had done the Grand Tour of Europe at the age of seventeen — twelve cities in thirty-eight days — expressly to visit all the great galleries, forming the instant opinions inevitable on such visits: hated Paris, couldn't live with the smell of Venice, loved Florence, adored London. So, after studying Fine Art and English at Yale, he returned to London to study for his Master's degree

at the Courtauld Institute.



He planned a career as an art historian, but his constant visits to London's theatres were fanning the flames of a growing interest in acting. He made friends in the theatre world and was persuaded to take a walk-on role in an American play called *Chicago* at the Gate Theatre. It was March 1935, and by the end of the year his life had been completely transformed. He auditioned for the part of Albert, the Prince Consort, in *Victoria Regina* — and won the role. The play was bought by Gilbert Miller to transfer to New York, and Vincent was asked to go with it. So in December he returned to America to make his debut on Broadway in one of the most coveted parts of the year, playing opposite Helen Hayes as Queen Victoria. He is also surely the only actor to star on Broadway and receive a Master's Degree in Fine Arts in the same year.

Victoria Regina opened to great reviews and praise was unstinting for Vincent as well — 'The young actor is perfect... A great new star has appeared — he should shine long in the heaven of show business.'⁵ He stayed in the role of Prince Albert for two years, but declined to go on tour with the production and remained in New York, joining Orson Welles' Mercury Theatre.

Vincent Price.

Success on Broadway aroused the interest of Hollywood and Universal snapped him up on an extraordinarily generous contract, which allowed him six months a year to pursue his stage career.

In 1939 he teamed up with Boris Karloff and Basil Rathbone for *The Tower of London*. The following year, he took over from Claude Rains for *The Invisible Man Returns* and also worked with James Whale on a jungle adventure movie called *Green Hell* of which Vincent observed: 'About five of the worst pictures ever made are all in that one picture.'⁶

He spent the rest of the forties at Fox and RKO with the highlights being *The Song of Bernadette*, *Dragonwyck* and *Laura*. He also pursued his other interests throughout the decade: opening an art gallery; launching the failed Modern Institute of Art; joining the board of directors of the Los Angeles County Museum; becoming a member of the Fine Arts Committee of the White House and the Latin Arts and Crafts Board for the Department of the Interior; promoting Native American culture, particularly poetry; and (last but by no means least) cookery. Among my earliest memories of him are cookery demonstrations on the BBC in the sixties — that and his Special Guest Villain appearances as Egghead in the Adam West *Batman* series, one make-up role which you will, I hope, forgive me for not discussing here.

The film which would finally establish him as a horror star, *House of Wax*, was a remake of Warner's 1933 hit *The Mystery of the Wax Museum*. The new film was to be shot in full colour and 3-D. 'Explore the Ultimate Dimension of Terror!' screamed the publicity, 'It Jumps off the Screen into Your Lap!' Rather more dubiously, they promised that you would 'SEE Crazy, Lustful Monsters Leap from the Screen INTO THE AUDIENCE!'

Price's character, Henry Jarrod, is the co-owner and creator of a wax museum. When his partner sets fire to the

museum to claim the insurance money, Jarrod attempts to extinguish the flames and save the exhibits. He fails in the attempt, but escapes with his life, his face scarred and burned.

The make-up George Bau created was made from phenolic' resins, apparently. No, I don't know either, but my dictionary informs me that phenol is a 'hydroxyl derivative of aromatic hydrocarbon, especially monohydroxybenzene (C₆H₅OH).' Vincent recalled:

'I'm told it was one of the most elaborately real make-ups ever done... George, under the supervision of two doctors... took great pains to study burnt scar tissues. These were then moulded in rubber, applied with... spirit gum or collodion, and then tinted with many colours of make-up...

'It took almost three hours to put on and as long to take off... and both processes were very painful... I sometimes had to wear the make-up for ten hours. I couldn't eat because my mouth was partially 'scar tissue', so I drank many liquids and because of the running around in the make-up, I fainted one day from lack of oxygen.'⁷

Jarrold's revenge is to murder his colleague and his girlfriend, Carolyn. He then nips along to the morgue, steals her body, picks up the insurance money and goes back into the museum business featuring Carolyn's wax-covered corpse as a remarkably life-like Joan of Arc. He also creates a wax mask for himself, which is a precise replica of his original face, thus allowing Vincent to work without make-up again.

But not for long. Carolyn's roommate Phyllis discovers the grisly secret and, attacking Jarrod, shatters his new face, revealing the charred original beneath, a shot of which Vincent also had clear memories:

'A wax cast of my own face was made — then another of my burnt face — the 'real' one enlarged to fit over the burnt one, and for one hour of horror, I wore two masks while the camera was set up and the director satisfied

himself everything was perfect for — hopefully! — *one* perfect take. It worked.'⁸

The movie was a great success, grossing \$5,000,000 and the die was cast for the remainder of Price's career. Perhaps his mixed feelings about the make-up, evident in the memories just quoted, explain the fact that he did not undertake other transformation roles. In all his subsequent successes in *The Fly*, *House on Haunted Hill*, the Corman/Poe series, *Tales of Terror*, *Witchfinder General*, *Theatre of Blood*, *Edward Scissor-hands et al*, he was always, simply and gloriously Vincent. The one exception to this is the 1971 film *The Abominable Dr Phibes* and its sequel the following year, *Dr Phibes Rises Again*, both directed by Robert Fuest.

When Dr Phibes and his beloved wife, Victoria, are involved in a car crash, Phibes escapes with his life, though with his face horribly disfigured. Victoria dies in hospital, however, and Phibes holds the nine members of the medical team which failed to save her responsible. Does he sue them, or seek to have them struck off? No: he systematically sets out to murder each one of them, employing the nine plagues supposedly visited on Pharaoh by God during the Exodus of the Israelites — bats, rats, bees, frogs, locusts, etc. As you would.

Tongue-in-cheek though the movie is, the combination of Brian Eatwell's art deco sets, Fuest's wonderful eye for detail and comic invention, and Price launching himself at his role with magnificent zeal, make the whole thing a delight. Details of the Phibes make-up have proved impossible to track down, but stills suggest it was a one piece mask covering the whole of his head, nose, mouth, ears — everything but his eyes. The good doctor's nose has all but gone, so have his ears and lips. The mouth did not need to move since he was unable to speak without the aid of a jack-plug, which attached to a socket in his neck. Vincent apparently spent the whole shoot living in fear of

catching a cold: sneezing inside such a mask was clearly not advisable. He was also spared the nightmare of spending the entire film in this make-up. With shades of *House of Wax*, Phibes creates a mask for himself which is a perfect recreation of his features before the accident and is astonishingly lifelike: Vincent Price's face in fact.

In the Epilogue to his 1981 book *Monsters*, which he co-wrote with his son, Vincent wrote about the challenge of work-

Price with Virginia North in The Abominable Dr Phibes. The poster proclaimed 'Love means never having to say you're ugly.'



ing with such restricting make-ups:

'The actors problem under mask is very different from when his bare face is hanging out. Make-up and costume seem to call for a larger approach to the art of make-believe. Here the problem is to make the unbelievable believable, the grotesque natural and the monstrous normal. The monster must be larger than life to be twice as terrifying. There's a strange relationship here between the monster image as a mask the artist wears, and the monster that the artist might be to himself. The problems of the

face in the mirror always seem larger and more terrifying than 'reality'. Of course, it would be a gross error to say that all, or even a majority of, artists who have dressed their imaginations up in the monster image have been troubled or in mental distress. That's just not so. In my profession particularly, the great animators of the image — people like my dear friend Boris Karloff — had no more problems than the rest of us..."

Another thoroughly sane actor who enjoyed dressing his imagination up in the monster image, and whom Price worked with in *The Oblong Box* and *The House of Long Shadows* and counted as a personal friend, is the first subject of my next chapter...

Instinct and Imagination

Christopher Lee and Hammer

A

According to the Tenth Edition of *Halliwel's Filmgoer's Companion*, Christopher Lee seems to have made more films than any other living actor." The count is 200 plus and still rising at the time of writing. But I use the word 'count' advisedly because, of course, if you say 'Christopher Lee' to anyone, the association is immediately to Count Dracula, although his outings in fangs and cape (I make it eleven films) represent only a tiny fraction of his total output. This is quite simply because he was by far and away the best and most memorable of the screen Draculas (sorry, Bela fans: it's only an opinion). He also had the advantage of being the first Count to enjoy drinking Technicolor red instead of black and white blood. However, it is not this character that will detain us here, but rather his revivals for Hammer of two other Universal monsters, Frankenstein's Monster and the Mummy.

Chapter Eleven Christopher Lee was born in London on 27 May 1922, on

the day Vincent Price was celebrating his eleventh birthday. Bizarrely, Lees great foil at Hammer, Peter Cushing, had celebrated his ninth birthday the day before. If you're going to make your mark in movies playing a Count, it's probably sensible to have a Countess for a mother, so he did: the Contessa Estella Maria Candini being a member of one of Italy's oldest families. His father was in the military, but his parents divorced when he was only four, and his mother remarried.

Academically outstanding, he should have gone to Eton, but was sent instead to Wellington College, which he hated:

'I had fallen among barbarians, with nothing to be done about that but grit it out for the next four years... In almost every particular that I recall, it was coarse, grotesque or harsh.'²

His life might have been very different indeed if his stepfather hadn't gone bankrupt when he was seventeen. Lee was obliged to leave school and find a job to support his family, his mother having separated from her second husband.



Christopher Lee. The Second World War now

intervened. Lee enlisted in the RAF in 1941 with the intention of training as a fighter pilot, but a problem with an optic nerve saw him re-routed into Intelligence. Much of his activ

ities during and immediately after the war (he was involved in war crimes investigations) remain classified under the Official Secrets Act, and he has never discussed them.

With the war over, Lee was certain he didn't want a military career, but had no notion of what he did want to do. Until a cousin suggested acting. Eureka! The Road to Damascus!

'It's the old story of the gun being loaded, the finger on the trigger; all you need is the necessary pressure and it fires.'³

So he became a member of the Rank Studios Charm School and made his movie debut in 1947 in *Corridor of Mirrors*. While making his second film, *One Night with You*, he accidentally got to appear in a third. On an adjacent soundstage, Laurence Olivier was filming *Hamlet*.

'A friend of mine who was working on the *Hamlet* set said, "Why don't you come over and watch Olivier directing?" I said I couldn't do that. He wouldn't allow me on the set. But my friend told me that if I could get a uniform — one of the guards' — and grab a spear, I could come and stand there and nobody would know. Which is what I did...'⁴

This would also be his first shared credit with the actor from whose name his own has become almost inseparable, Peter Cushing, though neither actor was aware of the other. Cushing had auditioned for Olivier for a play two years earlier but had admitted he could not do an American accent, essential for the part. Olivier thanked him for his honesty and promised to remember him, and he did, offering him Osric in *Hamlet*.

The two also appeared in the same cast in 1952, but once again in ignorance of each other. The film was *Moulin Rouge*, directed by John Huston. Lee's scene was shot in Paris, Cushing's in London. The camera operator on that film, incidentally, was Freddie Francis, who would subsequently direct the pair in *The Skull*, *Dr Terror's House of Horrors* and *The Creeping Flesh*.

While Christopher Lee struggled to make much impression for the next few years, being constantly told at auditions that he was 'too tall' or 'too foreign-looking', Peter Cushing established himself as a star in that most demanding of acting media, live TV. He picked up a slew of awards, including the snappily titled Guild of Television Producers and Directors Best Performance Award for 1954 for his portrayal of Winston Smith in *1984*.

Throughout this period, Cushing's agent had been fielding constant enquiries from James Carreras, the chairman of Hammer Films, about the possibility of Peter doing a film for them. Cushing had been too busy with his TV commitments to even think about it. But when he heard that the studio was planning a new Frankenstein film, he asked his agent to suggest him for the role of the Baron.

Lee was considered for the part of the creature precisely for one of the factors that had been holding his career back: his height:

'I decided if people weren't going to pay much attention to me as I was and as I looked... I would make myself so unrecognisable that people would then say, "I wonder what the actor who is playing this part really looks like?" So that's why I took the part.'

Thus in November 1956, Christopher Lee and Peter Cushing joined forces in earnest for the first time at Bray studios to start work on *The Curse of Frankenstein*.

Originally titled *Frankenstein and the Monster*, it was planned to be shot black and white in three weeks on a shoestring budget. Ironically, Universal helped to move the production towards the film we have today. Although Shelley's novel was in the public domain so anyone could use her characters and ideas, the script had too many associations with the story as

established on screen in 1931 for Universale liking, and they threatened legal action if the film went ahead as planned. So a new, more ambitious script was written with the budget upped to the dizzying heights of £70,000.

Universale copyright even ran as far as the name 'The Monster', the reason why Christopher Lee would be playing 'The Creature'. Jack Pierce's original make-up was also protected, so Hammer had to find a make-up that bore no resemblance to Karloff's. And in double-quick time, too.

Hammer's make-up artist Philip Leakey had taken casts and moulds of Lee's face and produced various designs which seem to have satisfied no one. Finally, he was reduced to creating a make-up directly onto Lee's face the night before filming was due to commence. Leakey recalled:



'It was a very rushed job... no time for experimenting, no materials worth mentioning and no laboratory for trying out ideas; just a mad rush to turn out something that looked horrible and in no way resembled anything that had gone before in other films. And it had to be ready the next day! [Christopher] once said that he would eventually murder me one quiet morning for having ruined his face and probably wreck-

Christopher Lee as the Creature.

ed any future he may have had.'⁶

Lee recalls many discussions with director Terence Fisher who 'wanted the monster to fit Christopher Lee's melancholy personality... like some wandering, forlorn minstrel of monstrosity.'⁷ To be sitting in a make-up chair the night before the start of filming, aware that no one has any notion of what the finished design should be, would reduce me to a gibbering idiot: that Lee bore it with the degree of patience he did is enormously to his credit. In his various recollections of the time he is full of praise for Leahey, but his frustration inevitably shows through:

'We did numerous tests on make-ups which didn't work. I wound up looking like a madman's idea of a circus freak... I said to Phil desperately, "I ought to look more like a human being, but a mess." We got it more or less human... but we overdid the mess in our hurry.'⁸

'In view of the fact that the monster was supposedly created from bits and pieces of different organs, it had to appear as though it was created in a somewhat crude and hurried manner, hence the scar tissue, stitches and contact lens for the blind eye. Considering that somebody once referred to it as looking like a road accident, I think Philip succeeded.'⁹

Because of the last minute rush, prosthetic pieces were never made for the make-up, and Leahey had to reconstruct it each day straight on to Lee's face with putty, cotton, adhesive and paint in a two and a half to three hour process. And he had to suffer the usual lunch time indignities:

'I had to subsist on mash and mince and spinach, and drink through a straw. And nobody was keen to eat with me, because the sight of me put them off their food. Hazel Court [Elizabeth, Frankenstein's wife] and Valerie Gaunt [Justine the maid] did so only under pressure from the publicity department.'¹⁰

Lee was aware that he was working in the long shadow cast by Boris Karloff's performance, for which he had nothing but admiration:

'There was so much thought behind it. The way he walked, the way he moved, the sounds he made, the gesticulations, all required a tremendous amount of thought... All these elements, if you take them together, resulted in an unforgettable performance which I think is unique in the history of cinema, not only this particular kind of film, but in any film.'¹¹ His own thoughts on the role were very clear: I was... convinced that the right presentation of the character was that of a pathetic, tortured child, which had no desire to be brought into the world, no mind of its own, no feelings, and no sense of responsibility.

'I felt that [he] would be lacking in control over his movements, feelings and emotions; and that all the things that he did were beyond his control. The bewilderment of the character is what I did borrow from Karloff.'²

Taking his cue from the idea that the brain and the body were a mis-match and that the brain was damaged, he wanted to present a greater lack of co-ordination:

the arms would be independent of the legs and of the walk. The movements of the head would, again, be independent from the other movements.'"

On release in 1957, *The Curse of Frankenstein* did record-breaking business in London, but the critics were in danger of trampling each other to death in a predictable rush for the moral high ground. 'Depressing, Degrading!... The most revolting exhibition I can remember seeing on the screen.'¹⁴ 'Among the half-dozen most repulsive films I have encountered.' In *The Sunday Times*, the normally rational Dilys Powell joined in the hysteria, solemnly announcing, 'For years I have rushed to defend the cinema against the charge that it debases. In the case of [*The Curse of Frankenstein*] I have changed my mind.'⁶ Such high-handed pomposity undoubtedly

helped swell the box-office takings: if I'd been reading them, my reaction would certainly have been, 'Wow! It must be good!' When it was released in the States, there was a similar response, but *Variety* at least managed to describe something I can recognise:

'This British version of the classic shocker well deserves its horrific rating, and praise for its more subdued handling of the horrific story. Peter Cushing gets every inch of drama from the leading role, making almost believable the ambitious urge and diabolical accomplishment... Christopher Lee arouses more of pity than horror in his interpretation of the creature."⁷

Having threatened nothing but lawsuits before the film was made, the studio now gave Hammer its back catalogue: you produce 'em, we'll distribute 'em. Thus in 1958, Hammer cast Lee and Cushing opposite each other in *Dracula*, and again the following year in *The Mummy*. Lee was given the title role and Cushing played the archaeologist who opens the tomb of Queen Ananka and releases more than he bargained for.

Australian born make-up artist Roy Ashton was responsible for creating the revived Mummy. He departed little from the look established by Universal (or more accurately, I suppose, by the Ancient Egyptians!), though it has more in common with the looser make-ups of the sequels than Pierce's matchless 1932 original.

Working on a life-cast of Lee's head, Ashton first altered the actor's features a little to give a more shrunken appearance, and then set to with bandages and latex. He also managed to give the Mummy moveable eyelids for the first time, though this was Christopher's only point of contact with the outside world:

'I could only open my eyes. The make-up was completely rigid and restricting. When you are restricted from making physical effects with your face, it is much more difficult, obviously, and much more demanding. Film acting is basically done with your

mind and your eyes. If it doesn't show in your eyes, it doesn't convince anybody. But it did enable me, with movement and with eyes, to create a character."⁸

Mark A. Miller has graphically described the privations to which Lee submitted himself during filming:

"The realism he gave to his character nearly wrecked his body... [he] had to breathe from the eye-holes of his make-up,

Christopher Lee as the Mummy with Peter Cushing.



which at times seemed to be smothering him. He not only had to burst through glass but also break down a door that someone had carelessly left bolted from the inside. Lee exerted enough force to smash through the door, and the take was used, but Lee partially dislocated his shoulder doing it. Explosives were detonated under his bandages to simulate gun shots. As a result of these stunts, he was cut, bruised and burned. He also had to carry Yvonne Furneaux eighty-seven paces through a swamp at night, three times,

with his arms fully extended... Doing this, Lee tore shoulder muscles."⁹

Furneaux, playing Cushing's wife, Isobel, who just happens to precisely resemble Ananka, the Mummy's long-lost love, has offered one of the finest testimonies to the unwavering integrity and commitment of Lee and Cushing. She had come to Hammer from the rarefied air of working with Antonioni and Fellini and admitted she only took the role to stave off boredom and was not expecting to take things too seriously:

'Lee was totally involved in what he was doing. He attacked his part like an actor would attack Hamlet... He took it so seriously. And so did Peter. He was dedicated to getting each scene done as best as possible in the most imaginative way possible. I thought to myself: "Woman, you better start taking this part seriously. You've got good people around you here.'"²⁰

And it was these good people who gave me my entree into the horror genre as a teenager in the late sixties and early seventies, when these movies were run on TV. My memory is that Lee's powerfully mimetic performance as the Mummy was one of the few things that genuinely frightened me. I adored *Frankenstein*, happy to be degraded and debased; I wanted to *be* Dracula; but this dead thing shambling around really bothered me. Lee was clearly not employing anything they taught him in the Rank Charm School:

'An actor is born, not made. Obviously the things that an actor learns are technique, voice projection, movement and all the other various things that an actor must learn, but the spirit of acting, the soul of acting, is born in you. Its a question of instinct and imagination... You either can or you can't. And I think in the case of people like Boris Karloff and

Vincent Price and Peter Cushing and myself and others, it

• • >²¹ was instinct.

And for all the longevity of his career, with his imagination and instinct fully engaged in these early years at Hammer, he later observed, 'It was absorbing work. I was never so content.'²²

Hammer were not slow to exploit the success of *The Curse of Frankenstein*. *The Revenge of Frankenstein* went into production in 1958. The studio had a two-fold problem in establishing a sequel: not only had Lee's Creature been destroyed in a bath of acid, but the first film had ended with Cushing's Frankenstein being led out for execution by guillotining. The first difficulty was deemed to be insurmountable, while the latter was overcome by having everyone at the execution turning out to be in the Baron's pay, allowing him to escape, continue his work under the name of Dr Stein and create a new Creature (played by Michael Gwynn with make-up again by Philip Leakey). This is the reason why Lee did not play the Creature again, and why Hammer's series is notable for making Frankenstein the focus of the stories. And there could have been no better focus than Peter Cushing's Baron, a performance that has not dated at all and, if anything, seemed to get nastier, more amoral, as the films went by.

Hammer undertook another Universal retread in 1960 with *The Curse of the Werewolf* adapted from Guy Endore's 1933 novel *The Werewolf of Paris*. Hammer had pulled the plug on

a planned movie about the Spanish Inquisition because they had been warned that the Catholic Church would certainly ban it and, to utilise the Spanish sets already built, the action was transposed from France to Spain.

Signed up to play Leon, born out of the rape of a mute servant girl by a beggar and afflicted by lycanthropy, was an unknown twenty-two-year-old, Oliver Reed.

The job of creating the make-up fell to Roy Ashton, who produced one of the most memorable of all werewolf makeups, even if, in common with all such make-ups — probably because of the flat front of the face — the initial association tends to be with a bat rather than a wolf.

Ashton's starting point was London's Natural History Museum, to study wolves. He then adapted these initial sketches to match the human form. He created a false dome



which ran from the top of Reed's eyes over his head to the base of the skull and was then covered with yak hair. (What is it with yaks and werewolves?) False ears, implants in the nostrils and dentures with exaggerated canines on the lower jaw like an inverted vampire, completed the image. A hairy leotard covered the body which means that in some publicity stills, the werewolf's chest is distinctly

Oliver Reed as The Werewolf.

creased and wrinkled. Reed's hands were made up with hair and false fingernails and, for close-ups, contact lenses were inserted.

A third Frankenstein film, *The Evil of Frankenstein*, did not materialise until 1964. For the first time, Universal gave Hammer permission to copy the Pierce/Karloff make-up. Roy Ashton produced the design which was worn by Kiwi Kingston, a professional wrestler, with an application of only one hour. Oh, lucky man!

Frankenstein Created Woman two years later, and missed the chance to create a memorable female monster since the Baron (Cushing acting everyone else off the screen again) transfers the brain of a dead man into the body and face of Susan Denberg, *Playboys* Miss August for that year.

Since mention of women is at a premium in this book, it would be worth noting here that Hammer did create two memorable make-up roles for actresses. In *The Gorgon*, Barbara Shelley played a human who could transform into the mythic, snake-haired creature who turned to stone anyone who looked her in the eyes.

Roy Ashton began work on the make-up, planning to base it on Cellini's Renaissance sculpture and build the snakes out of wood and leather. The job was taken out of his hands and given to the effects department, who came up with tubular rubber affairs remotely operated by cables. Shelley herself apparently wanted to play the Gorgon with real grass-snakes dressed into her hair. Not only did she not get her way on this, she didn't get to play the Gorgon at all, Hammer insisting on using a different actress (Prudence Hyman) for those shots.

Jacqueline Pearce fared rather better in *The Reptile*. She played the daughter of a doctor who from time to time transforms into a deadly reptile. Pearce at least got to play both sides of her character; with a two-hour stint in Roy Ashton's chair

for her trouble. As he had done for his werewolf make-up, Ashton researched his task carefully, observing and sketching snakes and reptiles. He in fact took a mould of real snakeskin so that he could have an authentic appearance of scales to work with. A basic layer of laminated paper was laid across Pearce's head to which hair and the plastic snakeskin were added. This application finished at the base of the nose and ran down the cheeks to end at the jawline, leaving the actress's mouth free to move. She did, however, wear a dental plate over her upper teeth which carried the venomous fangs. The bulging eyes, sitting proud of the face, had contact lenses fitted into them and were separate to the rest of the make-up, capable of being removed between shots. Although the line where make-up ends and Jacqueline begins is a little too obvious, and the whole thing looks rather plastic and lifeless, the Reptile

remains one of Hammer's most memorable images.



Jacqueline Pearce as *The Reptile*. Five further Frankenstein films were produced, with the final instalment, *Frankenstein and the Monster from Hell*, arriving in 1973. David Prowse, who would later win undying fame as Darth Vader in *Star Wars*, played the Creature for the second time for Hammer and the third time overall, having previously appeared

in the role in the James Bond spoof *Casino Royale*. The makeup was by now little more than a rubberised suit and mask, symptomatic of the fact that the whole series, like the *Dracula* series and the studio itself, had run out of ideas and inspiration.

The simple fact is that the studio's pseudo-Victorian gothic format which had burst across screens in the fifties as a Technicolor breath of fresh air, was now all too familiar. It looked rather staid and predictable and not in the least scary. It was also failing to make contact with a new generation of young movie-goers. 1973 was also the year in which *The Exorcist* was released, indicating just how wide of the mark Hammer was now firing.

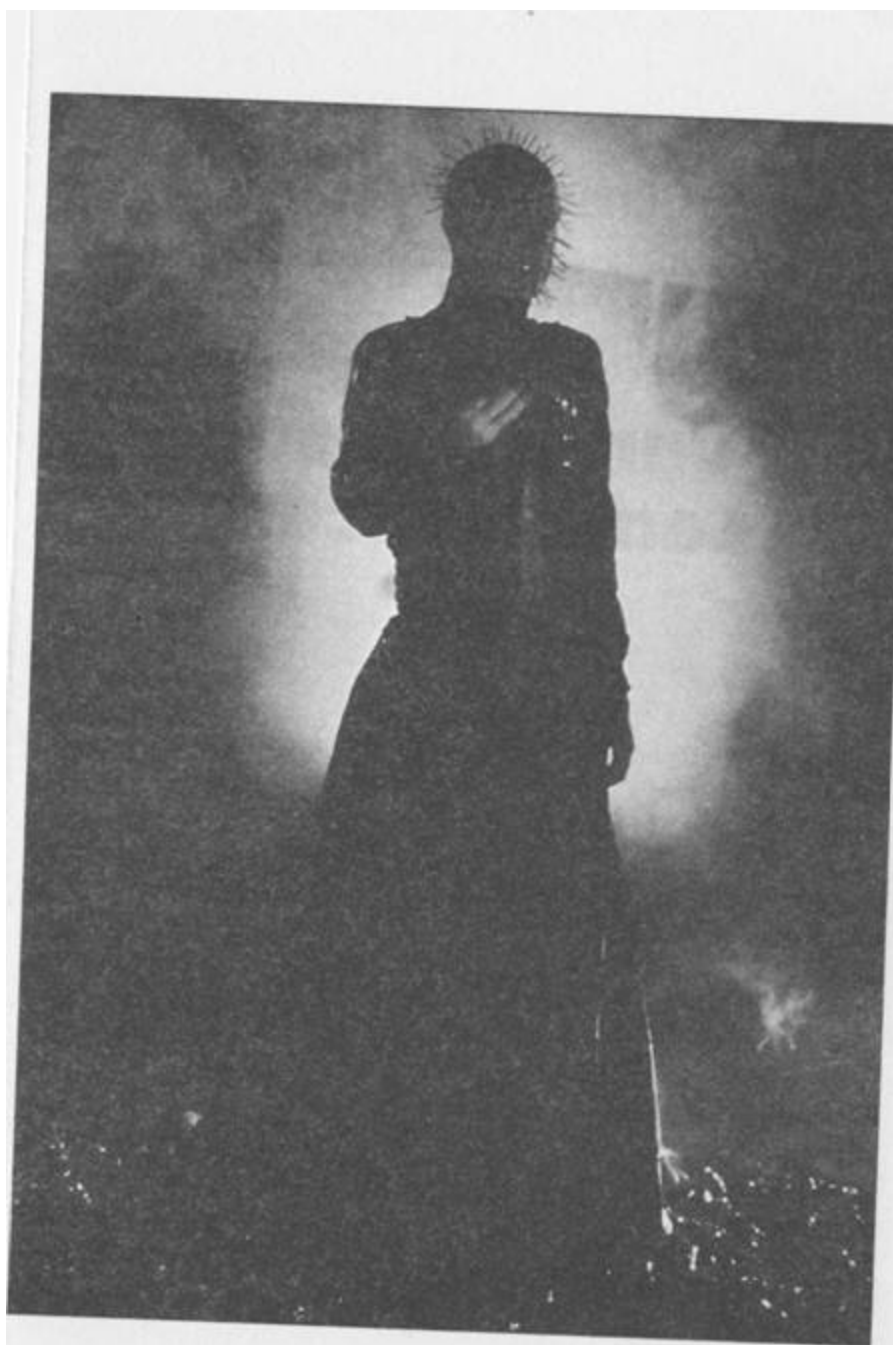
Meanwhile, also in 1973, something was stirring down in Texas which would do for the horror movie what The Sex Pistols did for rock n' roll three years later: Tobe Hooper was busy casting for a film called *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre*.

Part Five



**The Sons
of Ten
Thousand
Maniacs**

*Pinhead emerges from the Pillar of Souls. Hellraiser III:
Hell on Earth.*



Gunnar Hansen, Leatherface...

and Me

O

n the summer of 1973, a graduate student from the University of Texas' German Department met a friend with whom he had done some theatre work back in college:

Chapter Twelve 'We went into a drugstore to get a cup of coffee and have a chat. We were reminiscing about the good old days when a friend of his joined the conversation and told me that there were some people in town casting a movie. He said, "It's too bad they've got someone to play the bad guy. You would have been perfect." So I never gave it any more thought. And maybe a week later I ran into him again on the street and he said, "You know they've lost the guy they cast because he's holed up drunk in a motel somewhere and he won't come out." So I was thinking about this — I'd been working as a carpenter, and sometimes I worked as a bartender — I thought: "Why not do this? I mean, this would be kind of an adventure." So I called the casting director, who turned out

to be someone I knew, and I went down and met him."

Thus did Leatherface erupt into the life of Gunnar Hansen. Although Gunnar had been involved in acting, it was not something he had either ambition or desire to do. Having opened this door, however, he had to find out what lay beyond it. He went to a meeting with Tobe Hooper, the director, and Kim Henkel, the writer:

'They spent a lot of time explaining what the action was, but also what they were trying to do with Leatherface so that by the end of the conversation, I had a very good idea of what they were trying to get with the character.



"Tobe said to me, "Are you violent?" and I said, "No, I'm not violent at all." And he said, "Well, are you crazy?" and I said, "Not in the way you're asking." And he got this very worried expression and said, "Well, can you do the part?" and I said, "Well, yes, sure." So he said, "Okay. You got it."

'Later, Tobe told me that as soon as I arrived for the meeting he decided to give me the part because I filled the door! It made me realise that he really didn't have any great aspirations for the

Gunnar Hansen.

actor, he just needed someone big enough!'

In the summer of 1973, I was contemplating the prospect of going to university in my home town of Liverpool. Born in 1954, I enjoyed a perfectly normal childhood in the suburbs. In 1966 I went to Quarry Bank High School, a grammar school which became a comprehensive at the end of my first year. I achieved the exam results expected of me, turned down an offer to sit the 'Oxbridge' entrance exam for no good reason I can recall, and was now on my way to gaining the anticipated degree.

But a new passion was fast developing in my life: acting and the theatre. Acting was something I had always done whenever I could. From the usual round of Nativity plays onward, I had always got involved. Reading plays in class were the English lessons I enjoyed most. Early visits to the Christmas pantomime, other theatre and the cinema made a powerful and indelible impression on me and I was never happier than when school play time came round again. I can point to no one moment when 'the bug' bit, nor could I say that I was developing any clear ambition to be an actor, and there was certainly no precedent in my family for a life on the boards.

At senior school I met someone who was to help pull this vague interest in acting into pretty sharp focus: Clive Barker.

I had become aware of his existence in my first year, having seen him act in the school play, and was on nodding acquaintance with him in the corridors. Our headmaster, who nearly a decade earlier had been enlightened enough to give a pupil by the name of Lennon permission to form a skiffle band, now sanctioned Clive taking over the school hall to mount his own plays. There were two of these, one of which I went to. If I tell you it was either called *Voodoo* or *Inferno*, it will give you an indication that Clive's

obsessions had formed pretty early. Of the performance itself, I recall very little, but I was intrigued.

I got to know him properly a couple of years later when I did my first school play. We became friends pretty quickly. What I recall from those early days are his energy and enthusiasm for just about everything, his warmth, a razor-sharp wit and an ability to immediately make you feel 'included in'. I got included into working on another of Clive's extra-curricular plays. This was a pretty high-powered group I found myself with, all a couple of years older than I was. Malcolm Sharp had an' extraordinary ability to recall or pastiche perfectly entire scenes from movies. Jude Kelly, now one of this country's leading theatre directors, was there. And Phil Rimmer, one of life's genuine eccentrics: while the rest of us were all solidly and predictably of the English/art axis, Phil did weird stuff like physics, maths, electronics. The play was entirely improvised around a vaguely Arthurian story-line; I was completely out of my depth and enjoying every minute of it.

With the 20/20 vision of hindsight, I should have been contemplating the prospect of going to drama school rather than university in the summer of 1973. Nobody ever suggested I might think about training as an actor, and I'm not sure I'd have known what they meant if they had: I don't think I had any clear idea that this was something you could actually do as a job. Actors occupied some rarefied half-world for me, where the normal rules of reality were suspended. When I visited the theatre, I think I assumed that the actors just evaporated when they left the stage: they certainly didn't exit into the same world as the rest of us.

Meanwhile, the theatrical activities of the group which had gathered around Clive had begun to take on a life of their own, and were becoming the most meaningful and exciting thing in my life. Phil and Malcolm were still involved, and we had been joined by some of my

contemporaries: Sue Bickley, who is now an international opera and classical singer and possessor of one of the most beautiful voices I've ever heard; Ann Taylor, now a successful businesswoman in London; Julie Blake, who still lives in Liverpool; Les Heseltine, now better known as comedian Les Dennis; and Lynne Darnell, who is now my wife and works as a psychotherapist. These last two facts being, I hasten to add, entirely unrelated.

While I was still at school, we had mounted two productions at the Everyman Theatre in Liverpool. A former chapel, this dark, crumbling theatre was a focus for bohemian Liverpool. In an extraordinary act of generosity — unimaginable today — the theatre manager simply allowed us free run of the place when it was dark (a theatrical term for a theatre with no show in it). We presented a ghost story modelled on a Whitehall farce, followed by a musical(!) about a visionary artist in thirteenth century Bohemia. These were certainly the follies of youth, but it still brings a smile to my face to be able to say, 'Hey! We did that!'

Around this time, I also had my first brush with prosthetic make-up. We put on a production of Oscar Wilde's *Salome* in which I played the blind Jokanaan (John the Baptist). I could just have acted blind, but Clive wanted my eyes to be completely eradicated, so he covered them with *papier mdcht* and painted over it. A rope, tied around my waist and measured out to the front of the acting area, prevented me wandering into the audience.

Salomt was also filmed, on 8 mm stock, in a cellar underneath a florists, with one hand-held light. In the last couple of years, this has been released on video together with a later 16mm film *The Forbidden*. In 1995, I went to the National Film Theatre in London to introduce these films made by a group of friends with no resources other than their talent

and their wits some twenty years earlier. An 8mm sword-and-sor-cery animated film was begun but never finished.

At this point we were calling ourselves Hydra, the mythical seven-headed beast, representing the multiplicity of our artistic endeavours. Not for the last time, our ambitions were running ahead of us! The powerhouse for all this momentum was Clive. His resdess, even relentless, energies and imagination were constantly twisting and turning in different, sometimes baffling but always exciting and inspiring directions. There was also a constant stream of stories and poems, drawings and paintings, plans for novels and plays. *Plus fa change, plus c'est la meme chose*!

Not perhaps surprising, then, that as I made my way to Liverpool University to commence a degree in English, I was already beginning to question why.



By the time I began my studies, Gunnar Hansen had finished filming *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre*. Leatherface's mask, made out of latex, is just that: a mask created out of the skin of his victims. Gunnar didn't get to see it until shortly before filming started. I wondered what his reactions were the first time he had it fitted:

'Well, my first response was... you know I'm claustrophobic? I put this mask on and I can barely see out of it. The eyeholes are essentially the same size as [my own eyes] and the mask sits forward from my face a bit, so I had no peripheral

vision at all. I could breathe fine through the mask because they'd wired the mouth open so it had this big, gaping mouth.

'It was strange looking in the mirror, because I had no sense that this was me. When I looked in the mirror, I was looking at Leatherface. I don't like to watch myself in films, I just don't enjoy it. But I've never had a problem with *Chainsaw* because it wasn't me! It was this other person, and I didn't associate with him at all.

'It was actually a very simple set-up. I had to shave my beard off because they didn't want any facial hair to show, and they brushed my hair up into a top-knot to get it out of the way, and then pulled the mask on. It was a full head mask and it was laced on the side, under the ears on both sides. And the lacing's very obvious, because the whole idea is that this is the skin, just peeled right off. So it was just laced right on



Gunnar Hansen as Leatherface.

A simple set-up it me with rawhide.'
may have been, but wearing the mask brought its problems. It was a fast, unrelenting shoot. Six weeks (four for Gunnar), seven days a week, twelve to sixteen hours a day, with at least one day stretching out to twenty-six hours. And this was location shooting in the Texan summer, with the temperature often reaching 100 degrees:

'Once I started wearing the mask and sweating into it, the material started to get very brittle and they were concerned about the mask tearing. So they didn't want me to take it off unless it was at least a thirty minute break. The trouble is every thirty minute break is announced officially as a five minute break, so I would sit there sometimes an hour, not allowed to take the mask off. And I couldn't take it off myself, anyway.'

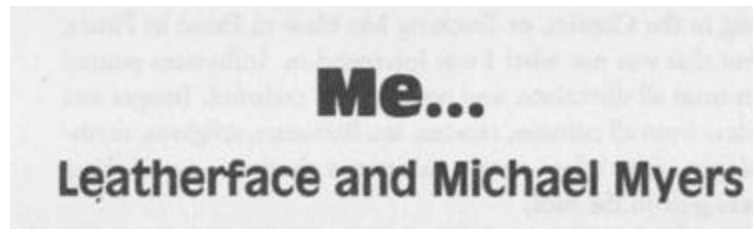
A combination of factors meant that he found himself somewhat isolated from the rest of the cast. The other actors were 'into this thing of: "Let's call each other by our character names all the time" and didn't want to socialise with Leatherface. Maybe just as significantly, there was no change of costume for Gunnar and it was never washed. He would chat with the crew, other actors from the 'family' or Dotty Pearl, his make-up artist, but more often than not, he found himself on his own:

'There were times when I think everybody wanted to believe I didn't exist, because they just didn't want Leatherface around them. I remember one day, right towards the end, we had a break, and they wouldn't let me take the mask off, and the hours were dragging on, and I was so worn out that I was just slumped in a chair with the mask on in full sunlight. I was just cooking. I was so out of my head that I wasn't aware of it. I didn't have the sense to just get up and say, "Just take this mask off. I don't care how short this break is supposed to be."

'I was sitting away on my own, and it was the producer who spotted me and came over. He called for Dotty to come over and get the mask off me, pulled me to my feet, dragged me to his white Pontiac Bonneville Sedan, opened the trunk which was filled with the coldest beer I've ever seen, handed me a bottle of Lone Star, put me in the passenger seat and took me

for a drive with the air conditioning full on.'

On another occasion, Gunnar disappeared off on his own, still in the mask. When it came time to start filming again, he was nowhere to be found. When they eventually tracked him down, he was sitting muttering to himself, 'Time has no meaning. Time has no meaning...' Just that. Over and over again. It's not a bad mantra for a film set, actually!



B

ack in Liverpool, my doubts about that degree were growing and by the end of my second term, I had reached a decision to leave. I went to discuss this with the head of the faculty, expecting to have to fight my corner, be referred to student counsellors or whatever. When I stopped talking, he said, effectively, 'Yes, well, I fully understand... the pull between the creative and the academic... sorry to lose you... good luck.' And that was it. About fifteen minutes flat, and I was out. I left the building with the sense of a great weight having been lifted from my shoulders.

Chapter Thirteen Meanwhile, the theatre company had been at work for the best part of a year bringing together what would emerge that summer as our most exquisitely, absurdly ambitious undertaking yet: two full-length pieces and about half a dozen short pieces presented in the space of a single week at the Everyman. The personnel was changing slightly, too. Les had moved on, and a few weeks before the performances, we were

joined by Sue Bickley's brother Graham, who's now an established TV and stage actor, and a friend of his called Peter Atkins who, as the writer of the last three *Hellraiser* scripts, has been putting words in my mouth for several years.

I look on this year as my drama school. We would play around with ideas and sometimes they'd lead somewhere, sometimes they wouldn't. It was hardly Giving Me a Grounding in the Classics, or Teaching Me How to Pause in Pinter, but that was not what I was interested in. Influences poured in from all directions, and nothing was excluded. Images and ideas from all cultures, cinema, art, literature, religions, mythologies, fairy tales — even sometimes theatre! — everything was grist to the mill.

At the beginning of July 1974, we descended on the Everyman. It was a manic, blissful, crazy week, with three separate shows to be put together virtually from scratch *in situ*. Although sets were non-existent and props and costumes were minimal, it was still a mad scramble against the clock to have everything ready.

First up was *An Evening of the Fantastic*, maybe half a dozen short pieces with no thematic link. There was *Poe*, a mimed piece using ideas from 'The Fall of the House of Usher', 'Murders in the Rue Morgue', 'The Tell-Tale Heart', 'The Black Cat' and probably a few more besides. I played a character who was an amalgamation of Poe and Roderick Usher. In *The Egg*, a piece of feminist science fiction, I played a flayed corpse being experimented on by a group of women — why I can't remember. *The Fish Bride* was about freaks in a circus side-show. I directed Clive in a solo piece called *Griinewald's Crucifixion*, about the artist of that name using corpses to paint from. There was more besides, but memory once again draws a blank. Some of these had rudimentary scripts, others, like *Poe*, we simply car

ried in our heads.

The Liverpool Daily Post came along to review proceedings and gave us an opening line which stung us to the quick. From this distance, though, I'd be disappointed never to have read it: 'Bothered, bewildered but never bewitched.'



Two nights later came *A Dream*, a sort of *Pilgrims Progress* without the religion. The central character, which I played, was indeed called Pilgrim, but where he was journeying from or to I cannot now recall, although there was something about searching for a jewel. A collaborative effort, entirely improvised, and directed jointly by Lynne and Julie, it was principally mimed, with quotes from a myriad of sources linking the whole thing together. Rapunzel was in there, along with the Sphinx and the Minotaur, a clown called Domingo de Ybarrondo, standing stones who turned into Elizabethan dancers and a ton of other stuff. My clearest memory of that night is lying at the front of the stage having just done battle with Clive as the Minotaur. A hermaphroditic angel entered (Why? Why not?). Naked and painted yellow — we probably couldn't manage gold — s/he had a halo, a globe we had constructed out of wire with honeycomb panels of coloured cellophane. Phil entered behind the angel, shining a hand-held light through the

globe. Multicoloured light streamed into the auditorium, like some disco-ball on acid. As I lay on the stage, I heard a voice from the audience say, very clearly, 'Oh, my God, how beautiful.' That response alone seemed the clearest vindication of what we were trying to achieve.

The *Post* did not agree. 'Not so much a dream, more a surreal nightmare' ran the headline. 'Bothered, bewildered but never bewitched. Remember reading that somewhere recently? My summary of The Theatre of the Imagination's first offering holds just as good for its second...' I'm paraphrasing, but you get the general idea.

Of *The Wolfman*, the third offering of the week, I have no idea what to say. It had somehow grown out of that musical about the visionary artist, via a non-singing version of the same. It won't surprise you to learn that it had something to do with lycanthropy, but we were not in any landscape Larry Talbot would have recognised. I remember a rabbit being skinned on stage and Phil pouring fire between two metal goblets: polyurethane paint set alight. (Don't try this at home, kids.)

I've no idea what Our Man from the *Post* made of this, but I remember we were lambasted at some length in *The Daily Telegraph*.

A year in rehearsal, one performance. And gone. Forever. Talk about written on the wind.

Across the Atlantic, Gunnar Hansen was also about to reap a critical whirlwind. In October 1974, *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* was released. It was an immediate *cause citta*. It did huge business and gained a notoriety (with echoes of *The Curse of Frankenstein*) way in excess of what was actually on

the screen. Gunnar was not expecting it and was not immediately aware of it:

'My whole idea was: well, this movie will make its money back. The investors'll be happy, you know, and maybe a few hardcore fans will remember this movie, but I never expected it to be any more than that. But we were so deeply into it and so far into the middle of it, that we couldn't see what we were doing. I mean Tobe maybe could, but as an actor I couldn't. I got to the point where I was just trying to keep alive, get through the day.

'After the movie was released, I took a friend out to the area where we had shot, and this car full of teenage boys pulled up, and they got out, and they all walked up beside us, and one of the guys turned to me and said, "You know, that's where they made that movie?" Right then I knew: It was like: Bingo! The light went on. This movie is going to go!



Gunnar Hansen in *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre*. 'I've always thought that one of the things that made the movie fly was the title, which was an afterthought. The name during shooting was *Leatherface*, so when they told me they had changed it to *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre*, I was really irritated, because I was saying, "Wait a minute, I have the title role!"

But that made the movie.

'What also made the movie was Rex Reed [American critic] saying it was the scariest movie he'd ever seen. And then these ridiculous front page stories in the *Philadelphia Enquirer* about how people had gone to see this movie and were leaving the theatres throwing up, demanding their money back. "They had never seen such graphic violence! Human limbs being hacked off and eaten!" None of which was in the movie of course, but it was worth a lot of money at the box office.

'I had a guy come up to me a year ago and say, "That movie had the best special effects I've ever seen. Why can't they do movies like that anymore?" And I said, "There are no special effects in the movie." "Oh no, no," he said, "I saw it all." People really think they saw that stuff. It's considered the first splatter movie: there's no splatter."

Gunnar was still basically not very interested in being an actor. He had the chance to go to a couple of casting sessions, including *The Great Waldo Pepper*, but didn't bother. 'I just wasn't very excited about it.' Since completing filming, he had gone back to graduate school and was teaching English in Texas when the movie was released: 'It was something we joked about in the Department, but nobody took it very seriously.' In June 1975 he left Texas and moved to Maine.

He did succumb to movie-making one more time, in the autumn of that year in Detroit — 'a terrible movie, just a very badly conceived movie' — which confirmed all his suspicions about acting and movie-making:

'I said, "I'm not going to do it. I'm going to do what I've always wanted to do" — which is write. And it was an easy decision, because I was thinking, "What would I rather do? Struggle and suffer and try to be good at and make a living at acting, or struggle and suffer and try to be good at and make a living at writing?" It was a very easy decision.

'Within a week of me consciously making that decision, Bob Burns, the art director on *Chainsaw*, called me and said, "I'm in L.A. We're making a movie called *The Hills Have Eyes*. Can you fly out in two weeks and be in it?" And I said, "Sorry, Bob, I don't do movies anymore." I was that adamant. I mean, you'd think I could have been a little flexible and said, well, maybe one last time, make a bit of money.

'I was living in Maine, writing for magazines and schlepping along. I'd hear *Chainsaw* jokes and I always thought that was great. Or I'd hear some reference on TV. On *Cheers*, Kirstie Alley babysits a house out in the country. She hears a noise. What does she say? "Oh, Leatherface, I hope that's not you!" I mean that was great, I always thought that was funny and great, but otherwise I was completely away from it, so I genuinely didn't know how famous the movie had become. I didn't know that Leatherface had become this cult character. And I had become this mystery. Nobody knew where I was. Word was I was building stone houses and writing *haiku* poetry!'

It would be more than ten years before he would finally realise what he had stored up for himself in that chance encounter with a friend of a friend over a cup of coffee in the drugstore:

'In 1987 I got a call from Fred Olen Ray. He said, "I'm in Hollywood. I want to do a picture and I wonder if you could fly out and do it?" This time I thought, "What the hell? Why not?" But I was scared about it, because I thought, "I can't just go back into movies after all these years."

'So off I went. The movie was *Hollywood Chainsaw Hookers*. I hadn't seen a script, because there was no script until I said yes. So I flew out on Friday, got the script at midnight, started shooting at seven o'clock Saturday morning. We shot Saturday, Sunday, Monday, and Monday at midnight I flew back to Maine!

'On the second day of filming, one of the actresses came up to me and said, "Gee, you're such a nice guy!" And I said, "Why are you telling me this?" And she said, "Well, you're so famous. And you played Leatherface. So between those two things we figured you had to be an asshole!" And this was such a shock! I had never heard anyone refer to me as famous. I didn't understand. If I had, I'd have held out for a lot more money!

'I got to talk more, and I got to understand that it really meant a lot to these people that the famous Gunnar Hansen was flying out to shoot a picture with them. And they didn't understand what it meant to me that I was in Hollywood! When I got back, a friend said to me, "So how was your trip? Did you see Hollywood? Did you get to do much?" And I said, "I got a glimpse of the Hollywood sign one day as I was driving to the set, that's all I saw. But I made a movie in Hollywood, so it was a great trip, you know?"'

In 1989, Gunnar was invited to a convention for the first time... but that's another story and it can wait until later.

For us, the rest of 1974 and most of 1975 was a fallow time. The calm after the storm, I suppose. I knew what I wanted to do, and that was to take the theatre stuff to other audiences. Not *The Wolfman*, but certainly *A Dream* and some of the short pieces I felt we could do more with. In particular, I wanted us to go to London, and play for audiences who might be more receptive to what we were doing. Without consciously framing it as such, I wanted the life of a peripatetic, bohemian actor.

I wrote some letters, got a few interested responses, but I had no real idea how to make this happen. We needed someone outside with administrative know-how, and there was no such person. I gave up. Significantly, also, Clive had no real interest in pursuing this. On his own admission:

'It was the process that was important. Those plays were like a sentimental education — at least for me. It was the debates, the rehearsals, the reading, the ideas... the performance was just like a culmination of that learning process.'²

University had had a negative effect on Clive, too. The Everyman plays had come to fruition while he was sitting his finals and the strain had undoubtedly told. In particular, I felt that writing *The Wolfman* — which he seemed to produce almost in a daydream: a snippet here, a monologue there, a new opening scene, let's move the middle to the end — had affected him strongly. For the first (and last) time since I'd met him, he seemed to have come to a creative standstill in 1974, his energies dimmed, uncertain where to turn next. He has said of this time:

'I'd just completed three years at university, which I hated and which I'm sure taught me nothing. I found Academe and its obsessive analysis of The Word appalling. It put me off for ages. I'm quite sure I would have become a writer much earlier had I not gone there.'³

By 1976, theatre fever was upon us again. But now we had become a mime company. When precisely we took that decision, I'm not sure, though it seems like a logical step from what we had been doing. I'm sure that Clive was the prime motivator in this as in all things, but it was more and more where our collective interests had come to rest.

We were absolutely clear about the sort of mime we were not going to do. White face, black leotard, pretending-to-walk-against-the-wind mime this would categorically not be. We were after something more robust, which would not be a parade of skill: this would still be allied to narrative and character. Our role models were Buster Keaton and *commedia dell'arte*. Somebody described it as like watching theatre with the sound turned down. We adopted the name The Mute Pantomime Theatre. Pantomime gives another clue as to what we were after: this time we were going to be funny!

Our line-up had changed again, too. The performing company now consisted of myself, Clive, Lynne, Phil, Pete and Julie. The scenario Clive produced, *A Clowns' Sodom*, mixed some of the Biblical tale of Lot and the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah with a Dutch *commedia* scenario in which Harlequin passes himself off as a woman so successfully that he becomes pregnant and has a baby. Clive was Harlequin, Phil was Pulcinella, Pete and Lynne were Pierrot and Columbine, and I was the Pantalone figure from *commedia* here seen as Lot, the patriarch who ran an abattoir.

We made our own *commedia-sxy* half masks out of papier maché on plaster life-casts. I was the first to undergo this, and it didn't quite run smoothly. The plaster set like granite and adhered itself firmly to my beard. I had to be literally cut free and then shave off my beard which still had large chunks of plaster sticking to it.

Quite why I was having a life-cast taken I don't know, since I was not masked as Lot. But transformed I most certainly was. Lot was huge. Lynne and Sue created padding for me, front and back torso, arms and thighs, into which I was strapped and buckled so that I now resembled the Michelin man. A white suit, which had more in common with a tent, went over this. I had added some thirty inches to my waistline. White gloves and a false, jet-black beard completed the image. Sydney Greenstreet in *Casablanca* was my model for this role, and also Oliver Hardy, whose size was always curi

ously at odds with his slightly mincing walk and the delicate, fluttering movements of his hands. Under lights on stage, of course, I sweated like I was in a sauna and the padding, which soaked most of it up, became thoroughly unpleasant.

We were still creating strange visions — Harlequin's baby turned out to be a lobster; Phil's Pulcinella died and was transformed into the Angel of Death, whom we presented as the silver clown — but now it was allied to a simple storyline and to comedy. And it worked. When we performed it at the Eleanor Rathbone Theatre in Liverpool in 1976, audiences loved it. We had flowers thrown on stage! By a friend, admittedly, but who cares? Even the reviews were good. A Roaring Sutcess, and All in Silence' is the headline I remember.



We even managed three performances this time, and we should have done many, many more. We didn't. We were mad not to. I really believe that this show might have broken us out of the shadow of obscurity. For Clive, his previous remark still held: this was still part of 'the process'. The culmination of the rehearsal process was for him a full-stop: even before the applause had died away, he'd be thinking, 'What's next?' He was a fine performer, but not at all attracted by the notion

Me as The Patriarch in The Day of the Dog, 1977.

of being one, and the prospect of doing the same thing for more than a few nights would, I think, have been anathema to him. But this stop-start process was becoming less acceptable to the rest of us: certainly it was to me. The solution to the problem was obvious, but it would take us a few years yet to reach it.

Had we not been friends first and colleagues second, I think we might have fractured and split apart at this point. But we held together and moved on. *A Clowns' Sodom* transformed into *The Day of the Dog*. It retained the slapstick comedy and inventiveness of the original, but became something darker and stranger. Harlequin now transformed into a dog-headed man, and the sexual sub-text came firmly to the fore. This was our first performance in London, as part of the International Festival of Mime in 1977. It went down well, though we were hardly the overnight sensations of my fantasy. But, hey, *The Daily Telegraph* liked it, with honourable mentions for Lynne and myself.

The next major work did not happen until we had moved to London, which we did by degrees in the next couple of years. A new city, a new life, a new beginning.

As we were regrouping in London in 1978, John Carpenter's *Halloween* reached the screens and launched the second of the monsters to divert us here — Michael Myers, or The Shape as he came to be known during the series of films which followed (five more at the time of writing).

In some ways, he is the quintessential character for this book because, more than any other character I've considered, he is completely defined by his mask. Even more than

Leatherface or Jason Voorhees, yet to come, he is the indestructible psychopath. Hidden behind that featureless mask, unspeaking and unreasoning, it is impossible to find any connecting point with him. Emotionally and imaginatively, he is completely closed to us, as he is from the world. He functions only as a killing machine.



This is, of course, what makes him work so well. He, like Leatherface and Jason, is very much a late twentieth century and specifically American vision of evil. I wonder sometimes whether these characters would have found such ready acceptance among American (and world) audiences had it not been for the activities of Lee Harvey Oswald, Sirhan Sirhan and James Earl Ray, the (alleged) assassins of John and Robert Kennedy and Martin Luther King respectively. They're either the lone crazy or the patsy for larger, darker forces behind them, but they seem to represent the implacable force that won't lie down and won't go away. Even when Jamie Lee Curtis succeeds in killing Michael at the end of the first film, he just gets up and keeps right on going.

In terms of make-up, little is required and there's no tale to tell. On goes the

Nick Castle as Michael in Halloween.

mask, and that's it. The principal requirement for the role was size — a sturdy frame and six foot plus. Nick Castle was the first to wear the mask: 'John Carpenter and I had gone to film school together, and had become real close friends. I was in the process of putting my first film together... so I asked him if I could hang out on set and take in what was going on. John said, "Since you're going to be hanging around anyway, why don't you play the killer?" I was thinking to myself, "Why does he want *me* to play the killer?" John said it was because he liked the way I walked... I would go up to John and say, "How should I play this?" and he would say, "Just walk." The mask... was doing more acting than I was... [John] pretty much puppeteered me through the whole film... I tried to add little notions every once in a while, but with a character like Michael Myers, there really is not a whole lot you can do.'⁴

Surprised by the movie's success, Castle was happy to end his involvement there. He went on to co-script *Escape from New York* with Carpenter and has since gone into directing himself.

Dick Warlock applied for the job of stunt co-ordinator on *Halloween II*:

'I was taking a meeting with the director, Rick Rosenthal, and I spotted the Michael Myers mask sitting on a table in a room. Just for a laugh I put the mask on, walked down a hall, growled a little and just about scared a secretary to death. I thought, "Hey, if I'm this good, maybe I ought to try out for the part!" So I tried out, and I got it.'

At five-foot-nine, Warlock was a few inches below par and had to be fitted with lifts on his shoes to compensate. He enjoyed the role and the challenge of being actor and stunt co-ordinator, but observes that the character did seem to get to him: 'It wasn't something I felt so much as it was in the vibes I gave off to others. My wife began to sense a strange feeling when she was around me during the making of the movie. I

couldn't put a finger on it, but it was something that people who knew me saw and felt. But I had a good time playing Michael. I would love to play Michael Myers again.'

When he was working on Mark Lester's *Firestarter* in 1984, Warlock found the kudos of even a single appearance as The Shape catching up with him.

'These two local kids happened to be wandering by the set, spotted my name on the trailer and immediately recognised it as the guy who played Michael in *Halloween II*. These kids were so excited that they insisted I come over to their house, meet their parents and watch videos with them. I know that wasn't the first night Michael Myers came home, but I'll bet it was the first time he's ever been invited.'

Nobody played Michael in *Halloween III: Season of the Witch*, since neither he nor his great adversary, Dr Loomis, featured in the story. Loomis was becoming as important a part of the series as Michael, thanks to Donald Pleasence's performance, which in terms of constant commitment and passion was quite the equal of Peter Cushing's Frankenstein and Van Helsing.

Both were back for, aptly enough, *Halloween 4: The Return of Michael Myers*. Dick Warlock did not get to play the role a second time, and another stuntman, George Wilbur, pulled on the mask instead. He was no stranger to genre movies, with credits including *Blacula*, *Planet of the Apes* and *Poltergeist*

'Playing Michael was an *acting* role, a matter of creating an illusion. Michael hasn't gotten into my personality, but looking back on all the evil things I've done in that film, I was worried what my friends and family would think when they saw it... [But] I got a big kick out of playing this mean guy.

The things we did... were so over the top and extreme that they were actually fun to do. I mean, Michael doesn't just get hit by a truck once but *three* times in the same scene, and he just keeps coming back for more. [He's] not just

killing people, he's ripping them to pieces. Playing somebody so indestructible and unstoppable was a challenge.'

George Wilbur was also interested in the possibility of playing Myers again, and he would do, but he had to wait while Don Shanks stepped forward to play the role for *Halloween 5: The Revenge of Michael Myers*. Don is also a stuntman, but has directing and acting credits which include *The Life and Times of Grizzly Adams* for TV. He got to play perhaps the most multi-faceted Michael of the series, including the scene in which Myers unmasks himself... and cries!

'Just because Michael doesn't say anything doesn't mean playing him was not an acting challenge. I've got a background in Greek theatre, where a lot of the acting was done in masks. I also know pantomime, which helps me give a sense of movement to Michael. Even though you get the feeling that he does little more than hulk around, I'm really adding some subtle things — or at least trying to.'

Maybe the subtleties were lost on the producers, or maybe subtlety was not what they were looking for, but it was George Wilbur who got the call to become the first actor to play The Shape twice for *Halloween: The Curse of Michael Myers* in 1995, which was completed shortly before Donald Pleasence's death. The demise of the actor who had made Loomis such a powerful presence in the movies might signal the end of the series. Then again, it might not...

Me... and Jason Voorhees

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y degrees over 1977 and 1978, Lynne and I, Clive, Phil, Pete and Julie moved down to London, and reincarnated ourselves as The Dog Company. With plays by Clive Barker, why not? And our first production happened to be called *Dog*.

This was yet another reworking of *A Clowns' Sodorn!* *The Day of the Dog*, but this time with words. Lots of them. It was long. Very long. It's one of the plays from this period I would most like to see revisited. Its style and scope (although all the action happens on one street in one day) always reminded me more of grand opera than fringe theatre. Nothing daunted, away we went again: Cecil B. DeMille on loose change.

Chapter Fourteen My character, who had started out as Lot the abattoir owner, had now reached his apogee as Louis Erasmus Sugar- man, his personality swollen to match his girth. As with all fascists, he earnestly believed that the entire universe was at war with him, and so he lived in an almost constant state of

anger. He would vent this rage in his favoured manner: a ritualistic beating of Quarrel (Phil's Pulcinella in new guise) to the elegant accompaniment of Bach's Cello Sonata and his own ten maxims on life, only one of which I can remember: 'Make history any way you can.'

Nightlives followed in rapid succession. A much simpler (and shorter) piece, this was about *doppelgangers*, secret lives and identities. I played a squeaky clean politician who has a double, an underworld boss (Clive), whose mistress happens to be the double of my wife, both parts played by Lynne. Confusing things further was the glamorous transvestite Rain-beaux, secret persona of a hit-man (Pete, both parts) with a contract out on Clive's character. Each gets drawn into the other's world and find it very easy to privately adopt the persona of the thing they publicly detest.

After these productions, Pete returned to Liverpool, and, although Julie was still involved, she was no longer performing. Only the incurably insane were now in this for the long haul. We also took the decision at this point that Clive would no longer perform and would concentrate on the writing and directing. That left only Phil, Lynne and myself as actors. So, reach for *The Stage*: it was time to hold auditions. Actors and actresses wanted. Only the incurably insane need apply.

1980 was the year in which Jason Voorhees first burst from the placid waters of Crystal Lake in *Friday the 13th*, written, produced and directed by Sean Cunningham. Ari Lehman was the first Jason at the tender age of fourteen, his distorted, swollen-headed make-up supplied by Tom Savini.

Francis Gillette played the role in the first sequel. He audi- *the 13th: Final Chapter*, saw Ted White, a stuntman with credits that run back as far as *The Creature from the Black Lagoon*, take over the role and submit himself to Savinis four hour makeover. 'I did it for the bucks,' he said, though he took to playing the role more than he expected. When he was invited to do number five, he said no: 'I had played Jason once, and once was enough.'⁴

Bruce Wieand did it — *Friday the 13th Part V: A New Beginning*— but this isn't really Jason at all, and Wieand told *Fangoria* in 1987, 'I really do wish that people would forget that I did that picture.'⁵ What picture, Bruce?

The real Jason came back to life for *Friday the 13th Part VI: Jason Lives*, with C.J. Graham behind the mask. The manager of a nightclub, he had helped a visiting illusionist by playing Jason in a gag which saw him come through the wall. The illusionist knew a member of Reel EFX and, when they began work on the movie, mentioned Graham to them as a possible Jason. A stuntman was cast instead, but things didn't work out and so, at seventy-two hours notice, C.J. was in the movies.

The man whose name is now inseparable from the hockey mask is Kane Hodder, but I'm going to keep him waiting just a little longer.

The three performers who joined us as a result of our auditions were Oliver Parker, Mary Roscoe and Jay Venn (after a false start with an actress about whom I can now remember nothing apart from the fact that she bred rabbits on the balcony of her flat which she killed and ate!).

The first new play by Clive the re-vamped Dog Company tackled was *The History of the Devil*. The Devil, thrown out of

tioned unsuccessfully for a different role and was asked about playing Jason instead:

'They told me I would have to get my head shaved and wear a lot of uncomfortable make-up. I was a beginning actor, and I had to take whatever I could get, so I said, "Sure."

'The make-up was extremely uncomfortable. They glued rubber pieces all over my face to distort it. One of my eyeballs was completely closed off, and they put dentures in my mouth to keep it forced open. I had trouble eating and drinking. With only one eye open, I lost depth-perception and was always dizzy." He claims not to have seen any subsequent films: 'It would be too depressing, like seeing somebody else going out with my girlfriend. It may be happening, but I don't have to know about it.'²



Ted White as Jason.

Richard Brooker snuck off with Gillette's beloved for *Friday the 13th Part 3*. Shot in 3D, this is also the first time that Voorhees turns up in the hockey mask which has now become his trademark. Brooker recalls director Steve Miner telling him, 'I better not ever come up to him and ask what my motivation is for a particular scene. He told me Jason *had* no motivation.'³ The fourth film, *Friday*

heaven for leading a revolt against God and condemned to spend eternity as Prince of the World, has appealed against his sentence. A court is convened to hear the appeal, with the power to summon witnesses (dead or alive) to test the Devil's claim that he has been nothing more than humanity's scapegoat. He wins his appeal and is returned to Paradise, only to discover that God has given up on us all and moved on long ago.

Energy was the key word for this production. There was a sense of constant motion as the court would dissolve and the new action — the building of Chartres Cathedral, the witch trials, the diary of Jesus Christ, an eighteenth century boxing match, the Holocaust — would establish itself before giving way¹ to the court once more. Each actor was therefore playing about half a dozen characters and although I was the Devil throughout, I was still portraying a different manifestation of the character in each episode, in addition to the court scenes.

Clive had matched this in the structure of the play and in his writing. Actors could adopt the role of narrator to speak directly to the audience or to each other outside the drama, and the spectator was not presented with a series of sudden breaks, but with a fluid, seamless narrative.

Jane Wildgoose, working with Clive and Lynne, was responsible for the design and the costumes. Jane had started helping with costumes on *Dog* and *Nightlives*. The range of her interests, always with an eye to the outrageous and a gleeful leaning towards the morbid, made her a natural part of the Company and an obvious choice to design the Cenobites' costumes for *Hellraiser* five or six years down the line.

The first night of *The History of the Devil*, in a tiny theatre above a pub in Camden Town, was the most nervous I had ever been, and it passed in a blur of which I have almost no recall. But it was a triumphant blur. The

show was immediately successful and popular. *The Guardian* described it as 'a mixture of *Decline and Fall*, *Paradise Lost*, Perry Mason and Flash Gordon', while a later performance produced the kind of gem of which only provincial journalism is capable: 'A sense of evil pervaded the auditorium at the Palace Theatre, Redditch...'

The Devil's final performances were given at our first visit to the Edinburgh Fringe Festival in 1981, where we enjoyed great popular and critical response. This production was a watershed for me, since it made me realise finally that, Dog Company or no Dog Company, it was going to be an actor's life for me.

We added a short, late-night piece for the Festival, the only Dog Company show not written by Clive. Nor was it written by any member of the Company. *Dangerous World* was devised by Oliver Parker and myself and consisted entirely of the words of William Blake, drawn from his poems, letters and other writings and given dramatic shape to fill the last hour of the poet's life. Calling it 'an accomplished dramatic performance', *The Scotsman* noted that 'a presentation of the words and visions of William Blake is an adventurous undertaking, and one fraught with the danger of excess. Mercifully this production does not fall into this trap and presents a balanced and compelling picture of the poet.'

By this time, Mary Roscoe had left the Company, though she remained in touch with developments and is still a close personal friend. A German actress, Konni Berger, had replaced her, taking over Mary's roles, and we had added to the repertoire a new play from Clive's restless pen.

Paradise Street was an extraordinary mosaic. It had Queen Elizabeth I arriving in present-day Liverpool, with the Earl of Essex, Ben Johnson, various courtiers and a mandrill in tow,

trying to finally answer the question of whether she had inherited syphilis from her father. It was about two brothers: Bonner, the hard-bitten soldier back from duty in Northern Ireland; and the happy-go-lucky, ne'er-do-well Quinn. There was a visionary Irish tramp-cum-poet. It was about the destruction of Liverpool by planning blight in the 1960s and 1970s. It was about love, lust, politics, sexual politics... Shall I tell you what it wasn't about?

The reviews were getting better, too. *The Kensington Post* predicted playwright Clive Barker, still in his twenties, is already a master of his craft and clearly destined for success.' *The Stage* declared *Paradise Street* to be 'as bold and as surely crafted a piece of theatre as I have seen in a long time.' The same august and thoroughly discerning organ described me as the company's 'virtuoso performer'.

None of this was impressing the Arts Council, though, and we were still without any significant funding. We did get a writing bursary, which went towards Clive writing *Frankenstein in Love*, performed for the first time in 1982.

We billed the piece as Grand Guignol to signify our intention of putting plenty of blood and guts on stage. Guignol is the name of a French puppet character, not unlike Mr Punch, except that he is far more violent and bloodthirsty than his English cousin. *Le Petit Guignol* was the puppet show, *Le Grand Guignol* was his big brother on stage with real people. It thrived on illusion and the theatrical equivalent of special effects: the horror movie on stage, really.

Jay Venn and Konni Berger had moved on, and Phil had decided to quit acting, though he was still involved with the Company. New actors had replaced them. It was a time for new blood all round, on and off the stage. We had people to deal with administration and publicity, costumes and props. For the first time, we actors were just that. Very odd! This was also the first play which Clive did not direct, Malcolm Edwards being invited to take that role.

Set in an unnamed South American country, I was Dr Joseph Frankenstein and Ollie played the Monster. Forget about deformed brains and mangled features, this Monster was all together. Doted on as an adopted son by Frankenstein, he had escaped from his creator and was now a revolutionary leader. In a pre-echo of *Hellraiser*, we had a skinned man on stage: Ollie in a latex body-suit.

We took *Frankenstein* to Edinburgh that summer. We were looking for a short show to fill the same late-night slot as *Dangerous World*, and Clive undertook to write one for us. I recall early talk of something titled *Live Sex on Radio*, but what he came up with was *The Secret Life of Cartoons*. Actor and fight director, Roger Martin, who had choreographed the boxing match in *The History of the Devil*, directed it.

A cartoon illustrator returns home from work one day distraught because his creation, a rabbit, has disappeared from all the drawings. He is unaware that the rabbit has arrived home ahead of him and is busy making out with his wife. The rabbit is also being pursued by his colleagues, namely a rabbit hunter and a duck. And the studio boss, a shady, mafioso type who happens to be a mouse, is after all of them. Nothing to do with Chuck Jones, Walt Disney, Warner Brothers, Bugs Bunny, Daffy Duck, Yosemite Sam or Mickey Mouse, you understand. Nothing at all. And if any of this seems to have anything in common with a very popular movie starring Bob Hoskins, remember that this was six years before the release of *Who Framed Roger Rabbit?*

Our two points of reference were the Looney Tunes cartoons and American TV series of the early sixties, such as /

Love Lucy and *The Dick Van Dyke Show*. These were reflected in both the design and the playing style. Roger (the director, not that other lupus) met Clive's punning, gag-a-sentence script with his own unquenchable energy and the result was a robust and relentless hour of mayhem.

I played the rabbit which — well, yes, it was absolutely Bugs. Since he is one of my heroes, I had about as much fun as I've ever had on stage. Apart from anything else, it was the perfect excuse to re-watch as many Bugs and Daffy cartoons as I could lay hands on. As I noted in Chapter Three, the world of the cartoons has much in common with the *commedia dell'arte* and Bugs himself is a not-so-distant relative of Harlequin. I did not wear a mask, but had a grey cowl with white fur and ears attached, and gave myself white-face make-up.

Moving from the intense, repressive world of *Frankenstein in Love* to *Cartoons* mad-cap mania every night, with only about an hour between shows, was quite some challenge. The Company achieved the switch brilliantly, buoyed up by finding ourselves playing *Cartoons* to full houses most nights. The show was named as one of the Ten Best at the Festival that year.

I returned to London certain of two things. First, we had a hit on our hands that suggested commercial potential. Second, this was the end of the line for The Dog Company.

I'll take the second part first, as they used to say in the quiz shows. It may seem contradictory to foresee the end of the Company just as we were becoming more established, but the reality was that the level of success we had hoped to achieve had not materialised. The horizon looked as far away as ever, there was still no sign of significant funding and the overdraft was getting bigger.

Then there was Clive's position to consider. My apologies to him if he has tended to appear in this narrative like an inexhaustible typewriter, churning out plays at the drop of a hat. Our work together had always been a collaborative effort, and he would not have reached the stage he had without the collective input of the Company. But I knew we could not keep treating him as a bottomless well, and I also felt that now was the time for him to cut loose and establish himself away from The Dog Company, something which I also felt was true for the rest of us. Personally, I

was tired of the grind of making things happen with no resources: all very exhilarating when you're eighteen with a grown-up theatre to play with, not quite so much fun ten years down the line.

This was also connected to the success of *The Secret Life of Cartoons*. If the potential of the play was to be realised — and I wanted it to be — I was certain that it had to be done without the Company. You couldn't go to a commercial producer and say, 'Here's the play, and here are the actors who'll be in it' when nobody knows those actors from Adam. Clive did try precisely that route, only to be met by 'the kind of hollow laughter you only hear in producers' offices.'⁶

When *The Secret Life of Cartoons* mark two emerged a few years later, I did audition to reclaim the rabbit, but they needed a 'name'. I made sufficient impression for there to be talk of me taking over if it ran in the West End, or going out on tour with it. Let's hear some more of that hollow laughter, shall we? Despite a successful out-of-town run, *Cartoons* arrived in the West End to a critical panning quite stunning in its ferocity and unanimity, and it had closed before you could say 'What's up, Doc?' The best laid plans of mice and rabbits...

I remain convinced that part of the critical response was bloody-mindedness. When *Cartoons* opened, *The Books of Blood* (Clive's collection of horror short stories) had gone stellar, we were in the midst of shooting *Hellraiser* and Clive was

already being labelled 'The Future of Horror'. So, they seemed to be saying, he's a best-selling author and a horror movie director, and now he wants a successful West End comedy as well, does he? We'll see about that.

But I could also not disagree with much of the criticism. The problem was always going to be extending our tight, one hour show to twice the length. When I saw a preview, I was alarmed to see that the interval came at the end of our storyline. Where on earth would it go from here? Nowhere

in particular was the answer: the second half simply trod water. The producers had updated it to the eighties, which was a big mistake, and the style had become cosy, English light entertainment farce rather than the robust American vaudeville it demanded. What had been homage had become pastiche.

So, in 1982, The Dog Company was put to sleep, calmly and amicably. I cannot offer a neat summary of all that had gone before: I have too much emotion invested in it all to be objective. The individuals involved remain my friends and colleagues — my wife — and in many ways the creative processes begun back then are still in motion. Indeed, while I'm writing this chapter the legacy of what we produced — Clive personally and all of us collectively — is taking on a new life of its own. Separate productions of *The History of the Devil* are underway in Liverpool and Chicago and the texts of that play, *Frankenstein in Love* and *Paradise Street* are about to be published.

I don't want to leave the impression that it all ended in failure. Apart from the little things like fame and fortune, there's not much from those seven or eight years that I would change. We did succeed, over and over, time and time again, out of all proportion to the resources available to us. It also made me as an actor: able to switch from style to style with ease, and used to having to produce the goods no matter how exhausted I may be or how difficult the circumstances. I, too, was ready to move on.

Chapter Fifteen

Robert Englund and Freddy Krueger

Now, step forward the guy who gives me the title for this last part of the book: Freddy Krueger — and the actor who brought him memorably to life: Robert Englund.

Freddy is a marvellous creation: half clown, half monster. That striped sweater, straight off the back of some cartoon character, and the battered hat, always worn at the jauntiest of angles, suggest one thing; the scarred, twisted features, menacing grin and fistful of knives promise something else altogether. And it ain't gonna make you laugh.

Born and raised in Los Angeles, Robert's training as an actor was in theatre on the East Coast before moving back to LA and the movies. However, it was TV that looked likely to give him his break when he took the part of Willie ('the benign, nerdy alien' is how Robert describes him) in the 1983 sci-fi series *V*. The miniseries ran as a pilot for the main series, and as it had been top-rated in the States, Robert assumed 'here's the next five years of my life.'²

But in the hiatus between pilot and series, he responded to a call from a casting director to go and meet Wes Craven about a new movie called *A Nightmare on Elm Street*.

'It was quite simply the only thing around at the time that fit into my hiatus. I knew that it involved make-up, but I didn't know that the entire movie involved make-up.

'All I knew about Wes Craven was that he had this really interesting cult reputation, and I'd seen loops from *The Hills Have Eyes* and *Last House on the Left* in Gothic bars in LA, and I remember being fascinated by the primal quality of these films. So I met him at the interview, and I was really intrigued by this guy. He was like this sort of Don Quixote, intellectual humanities professor [this is not just idle comparison by Robert, Wes *is* a former humanities prof]: goatee, long tousled hair and preppy outfit. And just remarkably articulate.

He's also managed to keep the fourteen-year-old boy alive in him, and that four-teen-year-old's delight and sense of humour, and I was really impressed. I really kept my mouth shut on that interview. I just played staring games with Wes. And that's all I remember about it. But by the time I got home, I had the role.'³



Robert's observations about Craven keeping the fourteen-year-old alive in him

self is crucial to the origins of Freddy Krueger in the director's imagination, since it was a chance encounter with a stranger when Wes was in high school that sowed the seeds. Hearing a noise outside his second-floor apartment, he peered through the bedroom window:

'There was a man very much like Freddy walking along the sidewalk. He must have sensed that someone was looking at him and stopped and looked right into my face. He scared the living daylights out of me, so I jumped back into the shadows. I waited and waited to hear him walk away. Finally I thought he must have gone, so I stepped back to the window. The guy was not only looking at me but he thrust his head forward as if to say, "Yes, I'm still looking at you."'4

The guy walked away, but then turned and made for the entrance to the building:

'I ran through our apartment to our front door as he was walking into our building on the lower floor. I heard him starting up the stairs. I woke up the whole house. My brother, who is ten years older than me, got a baseball bat and went out into the corridor, but he was gone.

'... That was one of the most profoundly frightening experiences I have ever had. The guy never left my mind, nor has the feeling of how frightening an adult stranger can be. He was not only frightening, but was amused by the fact that he was frightening and able to anticipate my inner thoughts.'5

The notion that such a figure might also be able to inhabit and control your dreams was prompted by a series of articles in the *Los Angeles Times* about people dying in their sleep:

'The eeriest case was a boy who had a nightmare... His family tried to quiet his nerves, and he refused to sleep. He stayed up several nights, and they sent for a doctor who gave him sleeping pills. The kid threw them away. Finally there was a night when the kid could not stay up any

longer, and he went to sleep. The house was quiet at last... Then they heard this horrendous scream from the bedroom.'⁶

His parents ran to his room to find their son thrashing around in his bed. A few moments later, he became still... and died. An autopsy was carried out, but was unable to establish any cause of death: no heart failure, no brain haemorrhage, no drugs, nothing. He hadn't so much died as just stopped living.

'I became fascinated with the idea of harm happening to a person in such a way that people would not be able to clearly discern if the harm came in a dream or if it came in reality. Those two notions became the backbone of the idea of a killer murdering people in their sleep.'⁷

'When I was researching *A Nightmare on Elm Street*, I ran across some literature that listed something like 200 various states of consciousness that are recognised by Western science. From various forms of schizophrenia to paranoia, to drunkenness, to hallucinations, to euphoria — there's a *tremendous* variety of ways your mind can perceive reality...

'The idea of being invaded through one's consciousness... is a fascinating idea... Nature... is full of one species' insidious invasion of another. The idea of laying eggs on a host that are eventually going to hatch, and then dwell under its skin and eventually digest it from within is so common in the insect world. The idea of something that invades you from a plane of reality that is not physical but mental just fascinates me.'⁸ So, with a little help from a high school enemy called Fred and a riff on the name of a character from a previous movie — Krug in *Last House on the Left* — Freddy Krueger the dreamstalker was born. As with Michael and Jason, the producers had originally planned to use a big stuntman in the role, presumably wanting to threaten through sheer size and bulk, and also with an eye on the considerable amount of stuntwork involved. It was a good call not to head down that road:

without Englund's swaggering manicness, the character would surely never have been half so memorable or successful.

With the part in the bag, Robert headed out to the home of make-up artist David Miller — 'his whole garage was his lab, with one old, ratty barber chair' — to begin finding out what he'd let himself in for:

'I believe I did three or four life-casts. I did the full head, I did half head, I did sections... There was a lot of creative input into the sculpting. David and I wanted to blow away half of the face and melt it down the end of the eye, side of the nose, side 'of the mouth, like a severe stroke victim. And then over that add burn scars and destroy one ear, almost as if a hound of hell had taken a bite out of it, but leave the other half normal so you could get all its value in profile and with lighting two faces.

'I think Wes liked that for a while, but I think between Wes and Bob Shaye [producer of all six *Nightmares*, and Chairman of New Line Cinema] they decided this is, after all, a horror film and we have to really go for it. And there was even a while during the first week or so where Bob and Wes were running up to me before every close-up with flanges of translucent latex and glueing it on so it would dangle. They wanted it to look like they were pustules that had just erupted and were peeling off.'

As would also be the case for me a few years later, Robert 'found' a lot of his performance during the transformation into Freddy:

'What happens for me is that I'm looking at myself while it's happening, and there comes a point where they're colouring [overpainting the latex] when I would have enough time to

start to play with how effective subtle movement was, or broad movement. Then it wasn't Robert any more looking back at me. With a lot of help from David Miller I started to find who Freddy was.

'I can remember moving my head and loving the way it looked, and I remember then realising I was going to play him feisty and wiry and physicalise a lot.

'It was that process when the colouring began when I would suddenly wake up and stop listening to whatever tapes I was listening to, try to put down that fifth cup of coffee that's making my knees go up and down, and just start really paying attention to that art I could see in the false perspective of the mirror.'

A Nightmare on Elm Street was filmed in the summer of 1984 and Robert then returned to what he assumed was to be his



■ Robert bread and butter work, the *England as* series V. It was while signing *Freddy* autographs at a sci-fi convention alongside the likes of William Shatner that he had the first intimation that things might be going to work out a little differently: 'My line began to change from my V fans into a lot of heavy metal kids and punk rockers from New York and New Jersey. They all wanted me to sign 'Freddy

Krueger' on the movie posters they had. Some of the girls wanted me to sign their bodies. That was when I knew that this thing had taken off.'⁹

So much so that he was back in the barber's chair the following year for *Freddys Revenge*, again two years further on for *Dream Warriors*, in 1988 for *The Dream Master*, 1989 for *The Dream Child* and 1991 for *Freddys Dead: The Final Nightmare*, and held it there until *Wes Cravens New Nightmare* in 1994. And in between parts four and five, there was also the little matter of *Freddys Nightmares*, the TV series spin-off.

In the same year as *The Dream Child*, Robert accepted an offer to follow in Lon Chaney's footsteps (and, by this time, Claude Rains', Herbert Lom's and Maximilian Schell's) to play the title role in *The Phantom of the Opera*. Kevin Yagher, who had overseen the Freddy make-up for the previous three movies (David Miller returned for parts five and six), designed and applied the make-up:

'Kevin came through with a brilliant design, making the Phantom look like he'd covered himself with body parts to look like his idol, Beethoven. But it meant it was make-up over make-up, so it was just hell to put on every day. Anytime I had to reveal the make-up under the Beethoven bust, it was at least a six hour application.'

Yagher himself estimates that he's applied the Freddy makeup more than 150 times. Time enough for Robert to find the downside of life behind the latex. Like almost all the actors in these pages, he encountered the horrors of lunch:

'Oh, horrible, horrible, horrible. The better the caterers, the worse it is. And you're famished, because you started hours before everyone else. I always lost weight on a *Nightmare* picture. I couldn't even eat the salads, because there was something in the dressing that made the lips go. I always loathed it when the make-up lifts up on the corner of your mouth. I loathed that brush. It'd be right before a

shot, I'd be ready to act, really intense, and they come up and look at you, you see that look in their eye, and they stick that brush back up inside [the latex], and it's that whole tacky-tacky glue thing. And you've *done* your four hours in the morning and you don't ever want to see it anymore. I could live with the rest of the touch-up stuff, but no more glue, please!

'My worst time was number four [*The Dream Master*]. Driving out to the god-awful Santa Clarita valley... When I hit that off-ramp leaving the freeway, my skin knew it was about to see Mr Glue again. It would start to tingle. I remember stopping the car, going to these dreadful chain coffee shops that I would never frequent normally, just to avoid going into that room.

'Also, I had an olfactory thing. I would smell that glue and the pros-aid, and I would see those flayed prosthetic pieces with that anal science-lab atmosphere. I would smell the powder. And I would use *any excuse* I could dream up to avoid confronting that. But my skin is literally tingling; it's like a twitch, an involuntary thing. My eyes start to water.'

Even now, twelve years down the line, the Gloved One threatens not to let Robert go. With New Line now owning both the *Nightmare* and the *Friday the 13th* franchises, there has come the inevitable talk of a cross-over movie: Jason meets Freddy, A Nightmare on Friday 13th, A Friday Night on Elm Street or whatever.

Robert and I had passed each other like the proverbial ships in the night on the convention circuit once or twice, but never for longer than a 'Hi, how are you, good to meet you' handshake. His name has come up in almost every interview I've done since *Hellraiser*. I'm constantly being invited to make comparisons between Pinhead and Freddy like we were some kind of demonic gangleaders fighting for control of the neighbourhood. The same, I would discover, had been happening for Robert in reverse. When I was approached by Christopher Figg (producer of the first two *Hellraiser* films and also *Nightbreed*) in the summer of

1995, about appearing in the science fiction movie *Killer Tongue* in Spain, I was intrigued to hear that he was also talking to Robert. So we finally got to meet properly, not in a crossover movie and playing — wait for it — human beings.

Finding Pinhead

Or... With Nails and I

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he first appearance of *Hellraiser* on my horizon came in the autumn of 1985, as I was preparing to start a theatre job in Southampton. Jane Wildgoose held a wake to mourn the passing of her thirtieth birthday in the course of which Clive mentioned to me that he was trying to put a movie deal together. Independent, very low budget, not much money, he stressed, but would I be interested? Silly question, really: of course I would.

Clive had already written two screenplays, *Rawhead Rex* from his own story, and *Underworld*. I had gone to a screening of the latter with him and I remember him standing outside the cinema in Leicester Square afterwards and saying, 'Well, I think I recognised two lines of dialogue in that! It seems to me the only way to do this is to do it yourself.'

Chapter Sixteen So he did. Initially, Clive and Christopher Figg, his producer, were trying to find funding in this country, but without success. They took themselves off to Los Angeles to pitch

it and New World snapped it up pretty quickly, meaning that the picture would be a little less independent and low-budget.

At some point in 1986, I was approached again. Clive was offering me a choice of two parts: this odd guy with nails in his head, or one of the removal men who deliver the mattress to the house. It seems odd to me now, but I very nearly settled for the latter. This was going to be my first movie, so why would I want to be buried in latex? Who would be any the wiser? Much better to make the briefest of appearances and be seen. All sensible, actorly reasoning — and completely wrong. Fortunately, a little voice surfaced in my head, pointing out that this nail thing sounded like a far more interesting challenge, and why the hell would I want to turn down the chance to play a monster in a horror movie?



So I made my decision. I would play... who? No name, you see. 'Lead Cenobite' was all the screenplay had to offer. *Concise Oxford Dictionary*: *cenobite. See coenobite. (The asterisk indicates 'any form that is not recorded in known documents, but merely inferred to have existed.')

So I'm not only playing a character with no name, but

Early sketch of Pinhead by make-up artist Geoff Portass.

someone who is only inferred to have existed. Intriguing start. Okay, lets see. Coelecanth (fish, mosdy extinct). Coelenterate (jellyfish). Coeliac (of the belly). Coelom (body cavity) Good company, this. Coelestat (instrument to photograph celestial bodies). Excellent. Ah, here we go:

coe'nob|ite... *n.* member of monastic community... [f. OF *cenobite* or eccl. L *coenobita* f. LL f. Gk *koinobion* convent {*koinos* common, *bios* life)]

So... first ingredient to chuck in the melting pot: religion. Some kind of priestly or monastic life, which implied a withdrawal from the world, an ascetic existence, firmly bound by rules, obedience and a sense of devotion to some deity or higher authority. (We did film the four Cenobites in their monkish cells', the walls adorned with devotional or fetish- istic objects, but the footage was not used in the movie.)

Checking the dictionary reminds me that it should apparently be pronounced *seenob'itt*, which I never have done. My apologies to *seenobitzs* everywhere.

If I'm taking a starting point, it should probably be this, the first description from *The Hellhound Heart*, the novella from which Clive adapted *Hellraiser*.

"Do you understand?" the figure beside the first speaker demanded. Its voice, unlike that of its companion, was light and breathy — the voice of an excited girl. Every inch of its head had been tattooed with an intricate grid, and at every intersection of horizontal and vertical axes a jewelled pin driven through to the bone. Its tongue was similarly decorated. "Do you even know who we are?" it asked."

The image described here by Clive is clearly substantially different from that which finally appeared on screen. The jewels at the end of the pins have gone (a lighting nightmare apart from anything else) and so too have the pins on the tongue. I was *very* grateful for that! Life and lunch would prove to be difficult enough without having to contend with a mouthful of hardware. The most significant

change is in the grid pattern: tattooed onto the head in the book, but for the film, they had become those never-healing scars as vividly demonstrated in the opening sequence of *Hellraiser II*.

The voice I gave to Pinhead is anything but 'light and breathy', and certainly sounded like no 'excited girl' it's ever been my pleasure to know. (That description has caused several people to suggest that Pinhead was intended to be female, which I don't believe. The pronoun used is 'it', after all. Sexless or androgynous would probably have been closer to the mark, but it's not something I remember ever discussing with Clive.) For the voice, I simply went with how I was hearing the lines in my head, which was low, slow menace. The dark, bleak irony of treasured lines like, 'No tears please, it's a waste of good suffering', suggested to me not so much breathy excitement as something rather tired and cynically mocking of human emotion, with a distinctly vicious undertow.

Let's deal first with the most obvious thing about this image. Pins. Nails. The guy has a whole bunch of nails banged into his skull. I remember trying to make a list of associations with that. Top of the list, inevitably, was crucifixion. Before I go any further with this, I want to take the John Lennon Amendment ('Pinhead Bigger Than Jesus Claims Actor!! Book- burnings In Deep South!!'). I am making no theological comparisons whatsoever, but it's the clear and obvious association with nails driven into flesh. Christ's wounds have become objects of veneration in themselves. On statues in Catholic churches and in countless paintings of the Crucifixion and Deposition, the wounds of the nails, the spear in the side, the crown of thorns and the weals from the flogging are dwelt upon in gruesomely loving detail.

The most important thing to come out of this for me was passivity. This is an image of received pain. Pinhead had to be malevolent and threatening — he is a monster in a

horror film, after all — but he doesn't operate by hiding round corners with a six-inch blade, or leap out at you with a chainsaw. In most of his entrances in the movies, he is simply suddenly there: still, calm and quiet. So the first thing he presents is himself. 'Look at me,' he seems to say. 'Look at what was done to me. Look at what I carry with me. Now think about what I might do to you.'

This immediately led me to think about body piercing in general. Clive has described Pinhead as 'The Patron Saint of Piercing'². The influence of the punk era was still very much around and, ten years on from the original safety pin through the ear, multiple ear-rings, nose-rings, eyebrow-rings and lip-rings were becoming commonplace. These seem to have become even more popular in the last ten years: small bars through the tongue, nipple, navel and genital rings are increasingly familiar.

Clive introduced me to an extraordinary publication, *PFIQ: Piercing Fans International Quarterly*, an (how did you guess?) American magazine filled with images of, and articles about, people doing the most amazing things to every available inch of their anatomy. Foremost among these 'modern primitives' is a successful, middle-aged advertising executive who, under the assumed name of Fakir Musafar, has devoted his entire life to the transformation of his body. He took his name from:

'...a very early *Ripley's Believe It or Not* feature, which I cut out of the paper and saved... The original Fakir Musafar was a nineteenth century Sufi who wandered round for eighteen years with daggers and other things stuck in his body. He was

trying to educate people in the mysteries he had discovered, but they didn't understand him or pay much attention to him. Finally he died of a broken heart.'³

Intriguingly for me, he was known as 'The Human Pincushion'.

I also had images in my head from books or magazines of guys pushing spears through their faces. What I was remembering was the activities of members of various Hindu cults, in particular the Tamil Hindus. At the Thaipusam Festival, devotees express their devotion to their god or goddess by whipping themselves up into a trance-like frenzy, dusting their bodies with ash and then piercing their cheeks or tongues. In the most extraordinary demonstration, two vertical rows of hooks are pushed through the skin — maybe as many as a dozen hooks in each row — on either side of the spine. Coloured ropes are tied to these hooks, which are attached to the waist of a partner, a devotional cart which they will pull, or a wooden frame from which they will allow themselves to be suspended. Their chests will also be pierced with hooks, holding bells or little metal pots filled with sacred ash.

Native Americans, I knew (admittedly from the movies: *A Man Called Horse* to be precise), also suspended themselves by hooks through the flesh at the Sun Dance or O-Kee-Pa. And then there were all the familiar images from *National Geographic et al* of Aboriginal Australian or African tribesmen with a bone piercing the nose, or discs inserted in a lower lip or the lobe of an ear, or metal rings placed around the neck

Fakir Musafar: The Human Pincushion.

to stretch it upwards. Scarring the face is also common, particularly in Africa where it is thought to heighten an individual's beauty or literally mark you out as an important member of your community.

On a less rarefied level, my mind went back to the filming of *The Forbidden* ten years earlier. I recalled that Clive had made what he called the 'nail-board'. This was a thick rectangular piece of wood, painted white with a black grid pattern on it. And at each intersection, a six inch nail was hammered into the board. Having hung this on the wall, Clive would then experiment by swinging a bright light in front of it, watching how the shadows of the nails moved around. Since *The Forbidden* was filmed in negative, it really did look amazing, the shadows being of white light.

I remembered this with a smile of recognition. This is entirely typical of Clive. The apparently insignificant image, the passing comment or idea, is always likely to be seized upon, stored away, and reintroduced at a later date in an entirely different situation. It was also typical that he would want to humanize his nail board.

Remembering *The Forbidden* alerted me to other correspondences with *Hellraiser*. The skinned man had made his first appearance here, and I recalled the intricate tattooing of his body, and how this had been related to the solving of a puzzle. Even further back, *The Forbidden* had begun life as a simple, experimental adaptation of *Dr Faustus*, Christopher Marlowe's Elizabethan play. The heart of the *Hellraiser* mythology, the crossing of the threshold after solving the puzzle of the Lament Configuration, had enough echoes of the Faustian pact for me to make another connection to Pinhead: Mephistopheles, demonic seducer and go-between.

Plenty more ingredients for the melting pot there!

Clive has said somewhere that Pinhead appeared fully formed as a drawing one day. There are certainly many sketches of 'Cenobites' which have more or less in common

with the finished article. While writing these pages, I found this comment in an interview Clive gave in 1987, but which I had never read before, discussing the mangling of his screenplay for *Underworld*:

'I had a great scene where the villain of the piece has these dreams and nightmares manifest themselves through him physically. He was forced by the monsters to take some of his own drug — he was a doctor, and all the way through we'd seen him using hypodermics on people. These pricks [*sic*] appeared on his face one by one and hypodermics pushed through so his face became a mass of needles — an image I finally used in *Hellraiser*, of course.'⁴

Since making the film, I've come across other bizarre echoes of the image of Pinhead. When I visited the Royal Academy's stunning exhibition, *Africa: The Art of a Continent*, in London in 1995, I was amazed by a group of figures called *nkisi nkondi* (untranslatable, apparently) made by the Kongo people. Not much more than a hundred years old, these are wooden figures — usually human, although there was a two-headed dog as well — standing up to five feet high, and covered in metal blades and nails which have been driven into the body and head of the figure. These figures might contain relics of dead ancestors or soil from the cemetery, and be further empowered by having pouches of medicine attached to them. Anyone with a grievance — a theft, or some physical or spiritual slight — would approach the figure and invoke its help. To activate it, you might explode gunpowder in front of it, or insult it, but most often you would hammer your nail or blade into it to transfer your anger to the figure and rouse it to act on your behalf. If you got the outcome you wanted, you would return and tie a piece of rope or rag to your nail. Thus, the more covered in metal and bits of rag, the more powerful and successful a figure was seen to be.

In 1989, Lynne drew my attention to this passage from a book she was reading:

'Jen... identified a kind of little demon inside her, an *enfant terrible* of iron will and tenacity who was possessed of irascible thoughts and tempers. He it was, she said, who provoked her to outrage and commanded such obstinate violence as she often displayed. When she described him, he had all the characteristics of a Rumpelstiltskin... When she constructed a wooden figure of him, out of his head sprouted fifty nails (by then she was in her fiftieth year), positioned and bent to hang over his ears, obstructing his eyes. Locked into a perpetual grimace, her inner figure was given the name of Little Nailhead.'⁵ Back in 1986, I had also had several conversations with Clive about the character, and he gave me the kind of elliptical, imaginative insight on which he thrives. Yes, he's a demon, he said, yes, he's the horror movie monster. But he also suggested I should think of him as some lowly clerk in a corporation. 'Look on him as a cross between a surgeon and a bureaucrat,' he suggested, 'in a hospital which has no wards, only operating theatres. He wields the knife, but is also responsible for keeping everything running on time.'

So the melting pot was by now fairly overflowing with images, ideas and associations. But I was still feeling completely in the dark as to who exactly this character was and how I would play him, but I felt confident enough to bide my time and trust my instincts when it came to making decisions.

As Clive progressed with setting up the movie, he was looking for the right make-up effects team to put his visions on celluloid, and settled on Bob Keens Image Animation. So in the summer of 1986, I went to Shepperton Studios in London to have a life-cast done and begin a long, happy and fruitful relationship with Bob and his team.

Geoff Portass had been given responsibility for designing and applying my make-up. He met me at the station and, as we drove to Shepperton, I remember him fishing a scrap of paper out of the glove compartment and passing it to me. 'This is what we're looking at at the moment, although it

may change before we make a final decision,' he said. Looking back at me from the paper was Pinhead. Not the final version — this was a looser, more tribal and chaotic image — but all the basic elements were there. I stared at it in disbelief. How on earth (or even in Hell) could you possibly make me look like *this*? I felt suddenly very anxious and unprotected. What was I letting myself in for?

What I was letting myself in for on that particular day was stripping to the waist, being covered in black bin liners and then having my head completely encased in plaster apart from a couple of straws up my nose to breathe through. This is as far as some actors get. If you suddenly discover that you're seriously claustrophobic, then all bets are off. Luckily, I had no such problems. It's a process I've been through many times since, and I even enjoy it in a perverse kind of way. That first, unbearably cold splash leads to a world of total darkness and near total deafness. The plaster becomes unbearably heavy and steadily warmer and warmer. I remember thinking, 'Use this, use this.' Exactly what or how, I'm not sure I knew, but the idea was forming in my mind that this weird process of transformation from human to Cenobite had to become part of my journey from Doug Bradley to Pinhead.

And then suddenly, the plaster casing is removed in two

neat halves, and light and the world flood back. The two halves are then put back together, making a 'negative' cast from which a 'positive' head is produced, upon which the 'face' of the character is modelled.

I was also presented with this Polaroid of me in the plaster. A flag had been pushed into the wet plaster on the top of my head, a huge pair of sunglasses placed on me, and Geoff and his assistants had gathered round grinning mischievously. In my little world of darkness, I was oblivious to any of it. It was my introduction to the unrestrained humour which Bob and his team brought to everything they did, and which, through the long hours in various 'ratty old barber chairs' that lay before me, helped to keep what could have become a nightmarish experience imbued with a sense of fun. Not that they didn't take what they were doing seriously, they absolutely did, but 'Time to Play', the bye-line for *Hellraiser II*, could well be Image Animation's motto.

With my life-cast now complete, Geoff began producing a finished design which would satisfy both aesthetic and practical considerations:



'As it happened I had booked a holiday just as preparation for the film started and as I left the only thing I knew about the film was that I was to do the Pinhead Cenobite as my main make-up chore. During my week away, various pre-production designs had been started, including a

few for Pinhead. The only one that really grabbed me was one done by Little John [not an escapee from Sherwood Forest, but a brilliantly talented designer and make-up artist on Bob's team], but as I looked at it for longer, I realised that I felt it was too tribal. The scars were very much like native scars and the nails were also very coarse. I felt that the make-up should look more refined. The photograph of Doug I had received, combined with the ideas generated from the script, gave me much more of an impression of a Lord from Hell.

'I took a view from the front of the face and made the scars exactly one inch apart in squares. They originally went down to the back of the neck. When I saw Jane Wildgoose's designs for 'the costume, I redesigned the back of the head as clear of scars but with large hooks embedded in the skull. Originally, I also had thoughts about some kind of brass plate over the top of the head, but I kept coming back to the simplest, cleanest design which allowed, as Clive had asked for, the actor's face to come through the make-up. The appliances were no more than one eighth of an inch thick, because Clive had specified that he wanted Pinhead to look like Doug Bradley.'⁶



A suggestion by which I'm not at all sure I should be flattered!

I would not see Geoff again until the day of the screen-test, and while he

The make-up being moulded on my life-cast.

was working on the make-up, my attention was drawn to the next crucial piece of the puzzle: the costume. Being familiar with Jane's work from *The Dog Company*, I knew enough to expect something extraordinary, but the designs she came up with for all four Cenobites, working in close consultation with Clive, were simply stunning.

Clive's initial suggestion had been that the costume should be based on abattoir clothing, such as chain mail aprons: 'Something between a butcher's outfit and a monk's habit,' he told her. Jane had also been introduced to the delights of *PFIQ*, which helped to focus her thoughts:

'The idea evolved that if the Cenobites were self-mutilating seekers of extreme pain and pleasure, they would be exercising an extreme form of narcissism. This suggested that they were extremely vain, and my aim was to produce costumes that reflected their obsession with pain and mutilation, but which would also be perversely stylish.

'It seemed appropriate to look at anatomy for inspiration for the form of the costumes. Using the anatomical drawings of Vesalius as a model, and having agreed with Clive that leather — 'distressed' leather of the kind usually used for making old-look aviator jackets — was an appropriate material, a series of drawings was made... I wanted to make a statement which was a development rather than a pastiche of the general sado-masochist look.'⁷

These first drawings included one devastating image for the female Cenobite. She was to wear the framework of a Victorian busde, like a cage on her lower back, in which she carried the mummified body of her baby. Brilliant. And vetoed by the producers. You could certainly argue that Cenobites don't have babies, but I doubt whether that was the reason. Good taste in a *Hellraiser* movie, eh? Perish the thought.

Further prompted by *PFIQ* and details of the Cenobites in *The Hellhound Heart*, Jane decided that:

the costumes should somehow appear integral with the body, the boundary between where the costume began and the body ended being indistinct. This led to the idea of making the costumes attach to the body by way of fish-hooks, and incorporating wounds into the design of the costume so that the wounds were revealed and worn as display.¹⁸

Hence the always-bloody wounds on Pinhead's chest, with the flaps of flesh interwoven with the leather of the costume, the high collar attached to the skull with hooks (detail rarely seen on film) and the rope that holds his weapons being strung through the exposed belly. The shoulders and arms being based on Vesalius' drawings of exposed musculature also blurred the notion of this being a 'costume' in any conventional sense. For the silver 'breastplate' overlaying the chest, Jane took her cue from the patterns being designed at Image for the faces of the Lament Configuration, and the handles of Pinhead's weapons were filled with images of people in the extreme throes of torture — detail never so much as glimpsed on film.



Jane Wildgoose's costume sketch for the Female Cenobite.

And then there was the skirt. I think it was as late as

the second movie that I consciously thought, 'My God, he's wearing a frock!', so natural and integral a part of the image did it seem. It would not, I think, be helpful to consider Pinhead in the context of transvestism, but it is fundamentally important. It softens the line as the eye travels to the ground and undercuts the macho' images of muscle, leather and metal in the upper half of the body. Try imagining Pinhead with legs. Doesn't work, does it? It also helped me with the physicalisation of the character, trying to find a slow, graceful walk that would convey the feeling of him almost floating along the ground. Some people have said they thought I was being moved around on wheels, so I seem to have got that bit right at least. I've also often been asked whether I wore lifts on my shoes, because Pinhead seems so tall. On the contrary, I've usually worn flat Chinese shoes. I attribute this sense of height to the clean visual line which the skirt helps to create. And he is known as the Pope of Hell, after all, and popes have always favoured a nice line in ball-gowns.

Over the skirt went the apron: black cotton silk-screened by Jane, with raised silver dots to achieve a metallic appearance, and then broken down with spray paints to give it a rusted, bloodied look. This was Clive's butcher's apron, obviously, but I also found echoes of the outfit of Samurai warriors, another association I found useful in considering Pinhead's unhurried stillness coupled with brief outbursts of blood and fury. A kind of 'Zen and the Art of Horror Movies'.

While I was making several visits to Jane to have various bits of the costume tried on and tested, and wondering what Geoff was up to down at Shepperton, I also had the script in my possession. The first thing to jump off the pages (apart from the unavoidable irritation that I wasn't in it very much!) was the nature of the language Clive had chosen to give to Pinhead, radically different from any other character in the film. This is a flesh-piercing, soul-

tearing demon from Hell who likes to engage in conversation, and does so with a dry wit and a self-conscious, almost ostentatious love of the English language and the well-turned phrase. Here is a horror movie monster who would not be at a loss for words if he found himself at a garden party with Noel Coward and Oscar Wilde.

I've already mentioned 'No tears, please, it's a waste of good suffering.' This was the first line I really grabbed hold of. I remember noting 'LAUGH!' in the margin next to it, largely because the revelation that it was a gag took me by surprise. Whatever else I was expecting, I had not been thinking in terms of being invited to draw laughter from an audience. But I also noted that it had to be pitched right. Robert Englund's Freddy was already out there, wise-cracking and dropping one-liners, and I had to resist all temptation to get drawn into his style. Freddy, I decided, was rock 'n' roll. Pinhead had to be classical music, probably Requiem Masses.

In fact, I found a brief piece by Antonio Vivaldi around this time which became my 'Pinhead Mood Music'. Called *Al Santo Sepolcro* (At the Holy Sepulchre), it opens more like a piece of modern orchestral music, and although it moves towards Vivaldi's familiar harmonies, there is always the threat that it will fall back into dissonance. The piece progresses in an exquisite agony, poised on a knife edge between beauty and disfigurement, joy and sorrow, pleasure and pain. Perfect.

Hellraiser

a

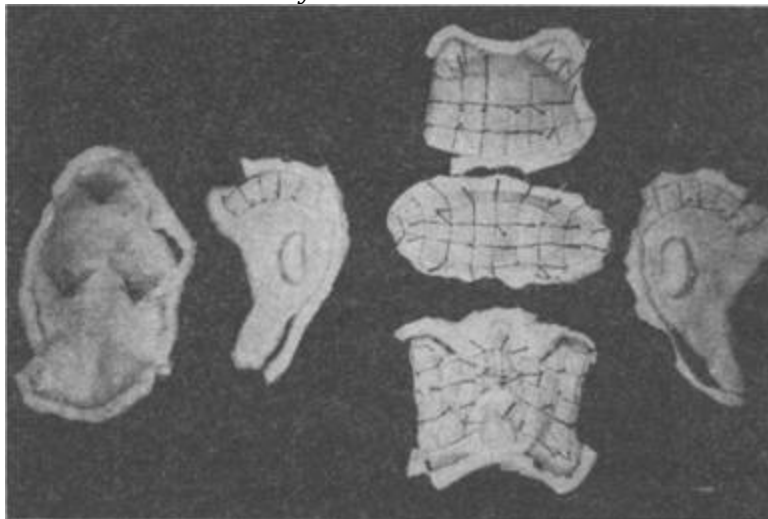
nd so to the screen test, and my first experience of being transformed into Pinhead, which I approached with a mixture of dread, high anxiety and eager anticipation. We were filming at Cricklewood Production Village in north London, a quaint, olde worlde place with a duck pond and weeping willows, surrounded by bars and cafes and a couple of distinctly rudimentary sound stages. My make-up was applied in a room shared with Bob Keen's effects, at a table in the corner with a mirror and lights propped up on it. I also got to meet up with my fellow Cenobites, two of whom I already knew. Nick Vince, playing Chatterer, and Simon Bamford, playing Butterball, who had played a small role in *Paradise Street* and had also helped backstage at Edinburgh in 1982. Grace Kirby was playing the female Cenobite.

Chapter seventeen A note on names. As I said earlier, no one had a name at this point. Who exactly can lay claim to being the first to christen us, I don't know, but Pinhead, Butterball and Chatterer were

affectionate nicknames bestowed on the characters by the Image Animation team. As shooting progressed, everybody adopted these names and they stuck so fast that we were all so credited by the second film. The female Cenobite remained anonymous. I believe her nickname was Deep Throat.

The make-up process began with the application of a bald cap. A little like a tight-fitting bathing cap cut away around the ears, this flattens the hair, giving a smooth, continuous surface from brow to neck, which helps the latex pieces lie better on the head. It also provides a surface to apply the adhesive that holds the pieces down. The design of the makeup has inevitably changed a little as the movies have progressed, but in its first manifestation, it had been designed in six separate pieces. The pins were already attached to the latex.

Geoff Portass original six-piece design. Note that the mouth, nostrils and ears have not yet been cut out.



Starting with the nose and then working out across the cheeks, the mouth and over the head, the pieces were painstakingly glued to my skin. Sculpting the pieces on my life- cast meant that, provided I hadn't gained or lost

weight dramatically in the intervening weeks, they would now fit perfectly to the contours of my face. Geoff had also realised that the scars were a bonus, because they created natural edges for the pieces to join together so that the face appears as a seamless whole.

That's the easy bit, really, and it's only once that process is complete that the skill of the make-up artist really comes into play: what's known as 'losing the edge', or as Eric Morecambe would have said, making sure you can't see the join. The point at which latex stops and skin begins, crucially around the eyes and mouth, must not be seen, no matter how close the camera comes. The painted colour of the skin must exactly match the latex, and the camera operator must *never* feel that he's looking at latex, however tight the close-up. If you can fool his eye, you've won. The illusion must be total and stay that way right through the long hours of a filming day.

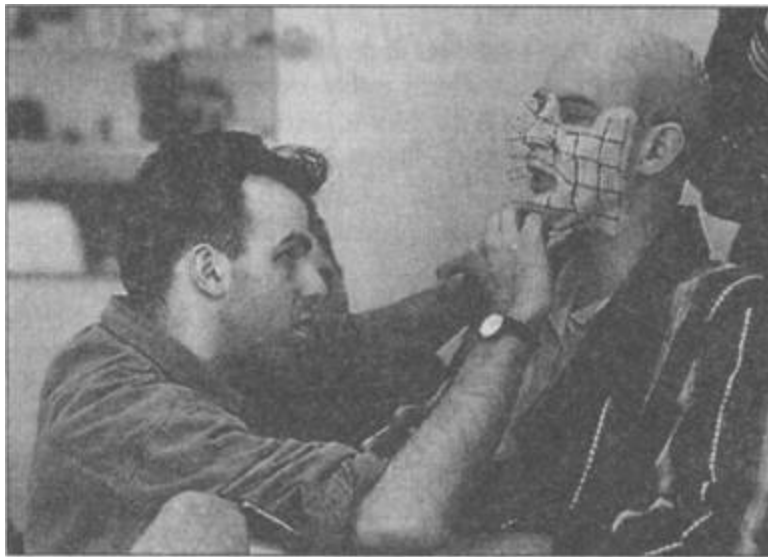
That's always a battle. The fact is that at the moment the make-up artist declares the make-up finished, it's pristine, perfect. And it will never be that good again: from then on, it's deteriorating. Each movement of the face, particularly the mouth, by talking, laughing, smoking, drinking, eating, etc helps to degrade the latex and weaken the adhesive bond. And there is an inevitable sod's law which states that directors will always leave the big fat close-up until the last shot of the day. That's a natural rhythm. As an actor, I'd always prefer to have a few nice long or medium shots at the top of the day, just to warm up, so to speak. The make-up-artists would, I suspect, be much happier if we worked back to front and got all the close-ups in the can before coffee!

I sat and watched this process unravel across my face with a combination of alarm and enhancement, peppering Geoff with questions as he worked and not always being reassured by the answers. He was, he informed me, using a substance called pros-aid, which had first been used in the field in Vietnam to stick

wounds back together before they could get to a field hospital. Now I was convinced that he might be able to get all this stuff on my face, but he'd certainly never be able to get it off again. Like Robert Englund, I was uneasy about the glue on my face, and I particularly hated having a hairdryer blown across my face to help things dry.

This first application took, I think, somewhere in the region

Geoff, assisted by Steve Painter (partly obscured), applies my make-up for Hellhound.



of six hours. Subsequently, I learned to demand what I called 'sanity breaks', so I could get away from the make-up and go walk-about for five minutes, but I think I just stayed put for the duration that day. People wandered in and out, checking on progress. I remember Clive becoming increasingly excited as he saw his Cenobites taking shape around him. Time and reality became a blur for me and by the time Geoff declared 'That's it', I was in a dislocated, trance-like state.

I asked — politely — if everyone would leave the room. I sat and stared at the mirror, letting a flood of sensations and emotions wash over me. After all the preparation that

had gone before, most of my real decisions about the character and how I wanted to play him were probably made in about twenty minutes right there. On the one hand it is a genuinely unsettling experience. Where was I? Left behind somewhere, an identity in my head, but according to the mirror not here any more. On the other, it was thrillingly exciting: this idea, sketch, description was now three dimensional and real.

I moved my head a little, this way, that way: I went close to the mirror, moved back from it. Then I began to tentatively move my mouth and face. A frown. A sneer. Raise an eyebrow. Smile. Laugh. Scream. Then words... I'll tear your soul apart... Angels to some, demons to others...

To put no finer point on it, I fell in love! I bathed in the sense of power and majesty that the make-up gave me. I felt a sense of beauty; a dark, mangled, inscrutable beauty. This detached, ordered piece of mutilation or self-mutilation, so carefully and lovingly executed. The head had a sense of peace and stillness about it, quite at odds with the horror the image was presenting. And beneath it all, a sense of tremendous melancholy, a feeling of a creature fundamentally lost. A line from one of Clive's plays swam into my mind: 'I am in

mourning for my humanity.' At this point there was no back story for the character, but I had discussed this with Clive and we had agreed he had once been human. But whether this was yesterday, last week, last year, ten, a hundred, a thousand years ago, I didn't know. I didn't need to. Sufficient to have that idea lodged into my brain. A perpetual, unconscious grieving for the man he had once been, for a life and a face he couldn't even remember. And a frozen grief. I felt now that Pinhead existed in an emotional limbo where neither pain nor pleasure could touch him. A pretty good definition of Hell for me.

This relationship with the mirror has remained crucial to me. It is your only way of perceiving yourself. All the actors I talked to for this book referred to it, and we've already seen how important it is in the preparations of actors in the Japanese *No* theatre. Peter Hall describes a basic exercise he used to prepare actors for mask work. He set up a table with a variety of character masks laid out on it. An actor would choose a mask at random and put it on, keeping his head bowed. Then he would look up at his reflection in a mirror for just a moment and immediately begin to act out the character he had seen there. As an extension of this, I was desperate to get to see some dailies or footage of



Pinhead.

the screen test, so I could learn what this make-up did. I didn't win this battle until the fourth movie. I wanted to have that objective image in my head to think about and work with.

Jane's costume was as magnificent as I had expected. Comfortable it wasn't, but it all worked in my favour. The tight, restricting leather jacket with the high, unyielding collar forced me to stand in exactly the stiff, regal posture I wanted. Movement *had* to be slow and deliberate.

Two decisions were taken as a result of the screen-test. Clive had always favoured delicate pins — closer to his original description, I guess — but on camera they barely registered, so Geoff had to construct something chunkier: more like nails than pins, in fact:

'We tried to find brass nails that would fit, but none were made. So we ended up using brass tubing with the heads of brass nails stuck on top. This proved to have its advantages, as we used the original pins with their heads cut off as the locking point for the nails: the brass tube with the new nail head simply sliding over the top. This also stopped the appliance being damaged too much when the nails were put in.'

The second decision was that, while everything else about the make-up worked fine, having my own baby blue eyes shining through was most inappropriate. So the black contact lenses were added, which improved the whole image dramatically.

And so, finally, to the start of filming! I very seldom feel nervous on a film set, but on that first day, they were jangling like the bells of Notre Dame. The first shock for me, as an actor born and raised in the theatre, was to have the safety net of rehearsal removed. I was used to having those weeks to trade ideas, develop scenes, analyse, build a character, try him with a limp today, a funny accent tomorrow, get it miserably, hopelessly wrong on the way to getting it right. Now I had to just walk on set and do it.

just walk on set and do it.

This being my first ever day on a grown-up film set there was an awful lot to get used to in a hurry. I was still coming to terms with the application of the make-up, and Geoff was now working under pressure of time. This was also the first time I had worn the black contact lenses. The Cenobites scenes were never brightly lit, so the overall effect for me was like wearing cheap sunglasses indoors on a dull day with the curtains drawn. On top of that, I'm short-sighted and the lenses were not made to prescription. Basically, I couldn't see!

We set about rehearsing the shot. All very simple, really. Start on this mark. Walk to that mark. Raise my arm — A bit higher, Doug, or it's not making frame.' 'Not that high, Doug, you're masking your face.' — point to a corpse which wasn't there and ask of a person who wasn't there, 'We want the man who did this.' Just seven words. Fine. Except I couldn't see my second mark. 'Okay, get him a kick mark.' I had no idea what they meant, but it's a piece of wood nailed to the floor, or a sandbag placed on the



'We want the man who did this.'
With me are Nick Vince as
Chatterer (left) and Simon
Bamford as Butterball. The trailer
poster may be for Hellhound, but
the still is from Hellraiser.

floor, so you can feel it with your toe and stop. Good. Except my feet got tangled up in the bottom of my skin and I nearly tripped over. 'What's his eyeline?' enquired a voice. What's my what? Boy, was I picking up the jargon. 'Take your look just a little camera left, would you, Doug.' Certainly. Except that if there was a camera in the out-of-focus black hole in front of me, it was news to me. A tiny red light appeared. 'This will be your eye-line, Doug.' Always addressing you like a doctor talking to a slightly dim patient. 'Okay, stand by everyone, this will be a full rehearsal.' I found my way back to my first position when a voice from behind the camera — I never worked out whose, but it wasn't Clive's — blandly enquired, 'Does he know his line?' 'Thanks, guys,' I thought. Nice tide for the autobiography, but not entirely helpful at this stage. There's a programme on BBC Radio 4 by and about people with handicaps called *'Does He Take Sugar?'* and every time I hear it, I'm reminded of my first glorious moments in the movies. Then a couple of takes and that was that.

Those first few days continued to be an extremely steep learning curve. In amongst it all, I was still making friends with the make-up, coming to terms with what it would and wouldn't do. As the actor behind it all, you have to be aware that what you're emoting on your face is not necessarily what's reading on the mask. Push it too far, and it quickly becomes absurd; rein it in too much and nothing happens (hence my desire to see early dailies). In fact, this make-up was such a busy image that the latter proved to be closer to the mark. My recurring note from Clive was 'Do less. Do less.' I was reaching the point where I felt as though I was just standing still mouthing words. Still the note kept coming. 'Do less. Do less.' What I had to realise was that with my face 'dead', emotionless, the make-up was working overtime for me. Adding just the slightest expression made a huge impact.

Once I'd taken all this on board, I was flying; enjoying each shot more than the last. It really all came together for me when we got into the 'Torture Room', with the swinging chains, spinning pillars and blue light spilling in through the disintegrating walls.

Meanwhile, Geoff and I were establishing a great working rapport. I trusted his judgement absolutely, and he was responding to my excitement about the character and the make-up. As we've already seen, such a good relationship is not always forged, but for me it is essential. You're going to see each other at your absolute worst; vulnerable, exhausted, anxious, angry, hung-over, whatever. And since they are going to Control a considerable part of your performance, it's a good idea to have them on your side.

For all Bob Keen's crew, no praise from me could be too high, and I've worked with a considerable number of them now. I have had absolute faith in Bob, Geoff and all the other guys (and, yes, occasionally girls) who at various times have had my face at their mercy. Throughout *Hellraiser*, it seemed that Geoff hardly left my side. He became more like a personal assistant than just the guy who did my make-up. Although the state of the make-up is always their principal concern, the make-up artist, of all people, is always aware of the actor underneath the latex. 'Are you okay? Do you want a chair? A cigarette? Water? Coffee? A new director?' I began to use Geoff as a sounding board, too, garnering his thoughts on how a shot or a scene was going. And I could always rely on the Image boys to have their finger on every pulse of the hybrid creature that is a film set, so that many weary hours in the make-up chair became transformed into a gleeful blizzard of gossip.

And if you ever hear an actor complaining about what's involved in playing a part like Pinhead (and, believe me, you will), remember this. If I was called in at 4am, they had to be there even earlier, so that everything was set up and ready to go the moment I arrived. I would then sit on my

bottom for four hours, drinking coffee, listening to music, reading the paper, chattering inanely or falling asleep, while they remain on their feet, working, concentrating all the time. When I'm on set they go with me. If there's a problem with the make-up, they have to jump into action. When I'm wrapped and collapse back into the chair, they have another hour's work ahead of them to get the make-up off. When I go home, they're still clearing up and thinking about preparing the pieces for the next day. (The oils used to break down the adhesive destroy the latex, so a new set of pieces has to be used each day.) In short, for me, they are the real heroes of the horror film.

And then, suddenly, filming was over. And that, I assumed, would be that. We had not set out to create a 'horror franchise', and there was no thought in anyone's mind, least of all mine, that Pinhead would become the character that everyone associated with the film. I thought I was playing exactly what I was playing: an interesting bit part covered in latex. Some besotted fan has since told me the amount of time I'm on screen to the exact second — I don't remember what, but I think it's less than ten minutes. I knew we had made something exciting and original but, although there had been jokes about sequels, it was not something I was thinking about.

I was surprised, then, to get a call asking me to attend a photo shoot. Pinhead was going on the poster. When we came to put the contact lenses in, Geoff discovered that one of them had shrivelled up. I've since been told that we only needed to soak it for twenty minutes and it would have been fine, but we didn't know that. So the shoot went ahead without them. The man from New World said, 'Don't worry, we'll black out the eyes

later.' They didn't. And that's why Pinhead has blue eyes on the poster for the first film — and the third: it's the same image.

As the film opened in the States, Clive called to tell me Pinhead was twenty feet high on billboards along Sunset Boulevard. This was exciting, but it would have been more exciting to have been there to see it. At this point, I was not involved in publicising the movie. Former Dog Company member Mary Roscoe went to America for a holiday and wrote to say she'd booked into a hotel in New Orleans, opened the curtains in her room to check the view, only to discover that the view was... me. Another actress friend reported walking past the poster for a few weeks and nearly collapsing with shock when a friend casually said, 'Isn't it amazing to think that that's Doug?' Cards turned up from friends in Australia and other places saying, 'Do you know you're all over this town?' Clive returned from opening the movie in Japan reporting that Tokyo had gone nuts for Pinhead: popular tattoo, phone card, jigsaw.

Well, fine. But what do you do with this information? Wonder where the next job's coming from is the answer. The next but one would be coming from exactly the same place, in fact, but as I set off to work in a seaside rep theatre in the summer of 1987, I thought no more about it.



'Would you like the song or Shakespeare first, darling?' Myself and Oliver Smith as Skinned Frank in the make-up room during Hellraiser. Actually, the cigarette holders were to protect the make-up.

Chapter Eighteen

Kane Hodder and Jason Voorhees

K

ane Hodder inherited Jason Voorhees' hockey mask in *Friday the 13th Part VII — The New Blood*. Like most of his predecessors, Kane's background is in stunt work. Ironically, his first movie as stunt co-ordinator, *House*, was directed by Sean Cunningham, the director of the first *Friday the 13th* movie. He was also stunt co-ordinator on a Charles Band movie called *Prison*. While reading the script, it struck him that the character of the wrongly executed prisoner, who returns from the dead to take his revenge, could be played by a stuntman, and he suggested himself:

'That was the first time I had a life-cast done. John Buechler was designing and applying the make-ups. It was the first time I had had full prosthetics: it was five pieces on my head, dentures, lenses, everything, and also a latex body suit because it was a rotted corpse.

'I loved playing the character, and John — I didn't know this at the time — was impressed with the way I worked in

the make-up. I really tried to work with the confines of the make-up and make it have some more character."

Hodder and Buechler worked together on another Band opus called *Ghost Town*-.

'During the shooting, he said he was being considered to direct the next *Friday the 13th*. A couple of weeks later he said he had got the job, and he said, "I want to suggest you to play Jason," because he had seen how I worked in the make-up and he knew what his Jason was going to look like: he was going to design the make-up himself.

'Paramount said, "All right, put the make-up on Kane and we'll do a screen test." We shot several hundred feet of me doing stuff, what I thought the character would do. And that's how I got the part. So then I was one of seven guys that had played Jason.'

Kane had seen the previous six movies as a fan, but had his own thoughts about playing the role. He was aided by the fact that this was a new start in the series, with Jason returning from the dead, and that the character's appearance has constantly changed through the series.

Unlike Michael Myers, playing Jason is not simply a matter of popping on a mask:

'With part seven, it was five or six [prosthetic] pieces

Kane Hodder.

glued to my head over a bald cap. The hockey mask was a separate piece itself, which I would put on myself afterwards. But it wasn't quite that simple. Buechler had taken a lot of the mask away, he wanted it really broken down and damaged. I wore dentures, but the teeth came outside my mouth and back along the jawline so that when the prosthetics were laid on, it looked like you were seeing the teeth through the decayed cheek. It really was an interesting design.'

Kane began his first day as Jason at three o'clock in the morning for a five hour application (it would come down to three and a half), at the end of which he also enjoyed that 'mirror moment':

'I tell you, it was the strangest thing. I felt so perfectly natural, sitting there. When I just have the prosthetics on, it just is a rotted, horrible-looking corpse. The real moment of transformation came when I put the hockey mask over it for the first time. I said, "Oh, shit!" and I started doing things in the mirror. They had exaggerated the time they needed, so I had an hour just to play around.

'Even now, I change totally once I put the hockey mask on. If I have just the make-up on and the mask is next to me, I'm just me sitting around on the set, but once that mask goes on, I'm not joking around with people anymore.'

So important a bridge to the character has his mask become, that by part eight he had become very possessive of it:

'Three weeks into the shoot, Jason's dentures disappeared. They had a back-up set, but I started thinking, what's going to happen if the mask goes? After that, whenever the mask comes off, I keep it. I take it to my hotel room every night. I bring it in to work.'

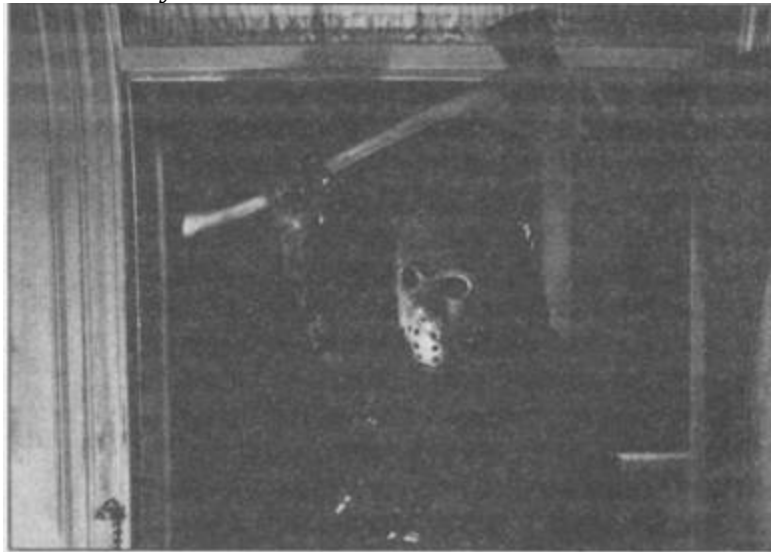
In addition to the facial make-up, Kane also had the fun of wearing a full latex body suit. Not fun at all:

'I had some days on part seven where I was so overheated that my head was pounding. Not in pain, but like a pulsing pounding. Boofi Boofi I just couldn't cool down. I got smart after that and started wearing cool suits underneath the latex.

'The thing that was good for parts seven and eight was that I could always take the hockey mask off. But in the last movie, KNB designed the make-up so that it was like the hockey mask had been on so long it was growing into Jason's face. The make-up was sculpted around the mask. That meant I could only take the mask off a couple of times a day or night, because it was quite a process to get it back on.

'That makes things fifty times worse, because when you do a violent scene where I'm throwing stuff around, you get real out of breath, plus you're encased in latex. You're trying to

Friday the 13th Part VII — The New Blood.



catch your breath, but you're breathing your own exhaled air. It was miserable. Much harder. That was with a cool suit, too.'

You know, sometimes I think I had it easy! Dealing with all this make-up is hard enough as a straight actor, but Kane also had to take on board the prospect of executing stunts with it all:

'Having the prosthetics on all the time meant having one eye covered, which was miserable for me: trying to do stunts with one eye completely blocked all day long. Plus I had a yellow contact lens in the other eye. Finally, after a few days, I said, "I can't stand this." They had to pick a tiny opening in the make-up with tweezers, just so that I could have some feeling that I could see something, even though it was a very minimal amount. I had to have the feeling that I could see with both eyes.'

Stuntmen are, in my awed opinion, terminally insane as a breed, but they're not stupid, and Kane would take trouble to block all his stunts through before he had the make-up and body suit on:

'But that was a little weird, because I would walk something out and then get the stuff on and come to shoot it and say, "Wow! I can't move like I was before." In particular, there's a shot in part seven, where I'm just bursting through a breakaway window. Buechler wanted me to run on a plank, crash through the window and just land and not have to take a step. I blocked it out, and then came the time to do the stunt in full make-up and everything, and I realised that I couldn't bend at the waist as easily. I was feeling to see how much clearance I had, and it was less than an inch. And you can see in the movie that my head just brushes the top of the window frame. I came real close to hitting it, which would have ruined the shot.'

Note that Kane's concern is ruining the shot rather than with ruining Kane. I had also been stunned by the enormous fire stunt in part seven. I knew that heat and latex don't mix. If you sit in the sun wearing the make-up, you don't feel anything for a while. But the latex is full of tiny little bubbles of air which heat up. Suddenly, you're

burning, and even though you get to the shade in a hurry, it seems to take forever to cool down again. So he's wearing this stuff, and now he's planning to set fire to himself:

'Well, what happened was, Buechler really wanted a good burn, and I love doing fire stunts, so I told him, "Well, you're going to have to do a version of the make-up that isn't foam latex." So he made something that looked just the same, but it was slip latex so there was no trapped air to heat up and ignite.

'And it worked so well. I helped him figure out how to do it. Instead of making a whole suit, he only made pieces that showed through the ripped clothes. Because I look more bulky with the latex on, I was able to put extra protection on for insulation from the heat.

'We never anticipated doing such a long burn. You can never anticipate how long or short a burn is going to be, you just have to go by how it feels. As soon as you feel that first bit of heat on your back — that's always where you feel it first — you've got to go down and get put out. Even though they put the fire out, the heat's still in there, and it can still burn you even if the fire's gone.

'We ignited on camera with a propane cannon: normally you don't see a burn stunt ignite on camera, you cut from something else and the guy's already burning. We rolled about seven cameras, all at different angles and speeds. And I'm doing the burn, and I know I'm fully engulfed, because I can see it. It's way above my head, six feet above my head, hitting the ceiling and spreading out, and I was just not getting hot. I'm thinking: "Jesus Christ!" And the guy that painted me up, we *laid* the glue on because we wanted it to be really scary looking: big, orange flames. So we used rubber cement and put it on so heavy that I just was fully engulfed, and I kept thinking: "I still don't feel any heat." I'm still stumbling around doing my actions, and I kept thinking, "Why aren't I feeling any heat?"

'Finally, I saw Buechler signalling to me to go down. I had burned so long, I was burning all the fuel off and the flames

were starting to die down. That never happens. Usually you get hot, you go down and you're still roaring flames when they put you out. I was burning so long, I was starting to die down and not look as good, and he wanted to see me fall in the shot, and then the whole house goes up. When you watch it in the film, you can see that when I go down the flames are much less than they were at the beginning. But it still looks good, and it ended up being about forty-four seconds, which is a long time.'

Kane's first realisation as to how playing Jason Voorhees was going to transform his life came very soon after completing part seven, but almost accidentally. He had, after all, got used to denying that he was playing the part at all:

'While we were shooting the movie, Paramount didn't want me admitting to anyone that I was playing the character. Some guy called from *Fangoria* while we were shooting in Alabama: "I hear you're playing Jason and you're shooting the movie right now?" Called me right in my hotel room. And I said, "Well, I don't know what you're talking about!" He's calling in my hotel room to talk about the film, and they're telling me, "Don't admit it." So I didn't.

'Right after we finished the movie — we finished re-shoots in March '88 and the movie was in the theatres 13 May: a Friday of course — between finishing up shooting and releasing the

movie, Buechler was a guest at the *Fangoria* show in LA. And he said, "Why don't you come down?" I had never been to one of the conventions before and I said, "Okay, I'll come down and hang out and watch." So I sat in the audience and watched his panel and at the end he says, "By the way, the new guy that's playing Jason is in the audience. Stand up, Kane!" So I stood up, and everybody clapped, and I sat back down.

At the end of the panel I started walking out of the auditorium. I was with my wife — girlfriend then, wife now — and she says, "Jesus Christ!" And I turned around and there must have been a hundred people following us. That was the first time that it really occurred to me how much of a change and" how incredible this whole thing was going to be, how popular I was going to be because of this. I was just one of seven guys!'

When Kane heard that *Friday the 13th Part VIII: Jason Takes Manhattan* was in the works, he indicated his interest in playing the part again. Director Rob Hedden said he really wanted him, and so Kane became the first to play the character twice. And by the time the ninth film, *Jason Goes to Hell: The Final Friday* (which saw Sean

*Friday the 13th Part VIII: Jason
Takes Manhattan.*

Cunningham return to the series as producer) came around, it was hard to imagine anyone else playing the role.

And aside from the much talked about Freddy meets Jason movie, I wondered what Kane would like to do outside of stunt work. Would you believe comedy? A sitcom. You see, inside every bad guy...



O

It was following screenings of *Hellraiser* at the 1987 Cannes Film Festival that Clive and Chris Figg first pitched *Hellhound: Hellraiser II* to New World, and things moved pretty fast after that.

Back in Liverpool, Peter Atkins had been writing fiction too, some of which he sent to Clive, who was impressed enough to immediately invite him to write the screenplay. Pete delivered a first draft less than a month later, in August, and by the end of the year, a polished third draft had become a shooting script. And early in 1988 we were off again.

A substantially increased budget meant that we were able to move from the delightful eccentricities of Crickdewood to Pinewood Studios. Real sound stages! Dressing rooms (with your name on the door handwritten in best copper-plate)! Proper make-up rooms! I was like the proverbial kid in the candy store wandering through all this.

Chapter Nineteen Geoff was again handling my make-up, but was now also

supervising the effects. Nick and Simon were back with me as Chatterer and Butterball, and Barbie Wilde was our new female. Clive had chosen not to direct, and was instead executive producer. Replacing him was Tony Randel. Tony had started working with New World back in the days when Roger Corman was still in charge, and he had been heavily involved with *Hellraiser* during post-production. He had also been collaborating extensively with Pete during the final stages of the screenplay.

In addition to retreading Pinhead, I also had a brief appearance at the start of the film as the English army officer — anonymous at this point — who solves the Lament Configuration and is transformed into Pinhead. I would have had two other scenes showing him locating and purchasing the box but, in 1987, just as the budget was being moved from dollars to sterling, Black Monday hit the world's stock markets and the sudden shift in the exchange rates wiped out a considerable chunk of money. And since these two scenes required one-off sets for what were effectively establishing shots, they were among the first to go.

Most of my memories of *Hellhound* involve early mornings and killing time.



Me as Elliott
Spenser from
Hellhound. Few of my days seemed
to start later than 4am
and may have added to a
sense

of foreboding about the make-up which I had not had before. I have done early mornings since then, but somehow driving through the empty streets of Los Angeles and sitting on the steps of my trailer, breakfast burrito in hand, watching the sun rise over the city, has a certain *je ne sais quoi* which the North Circular Road on a grim winters morning just seems to lack. Walking bleary-eyed into the make-up room and seeing the empty chair and the latex pieces lying in wait; the pots of glue and paint; the brushes and steel implements laid out in neat rows like in an operating theatre, made me sometimes feel physically sick and I found myself possessed by an urge to turn and run.

This may not have been helped by having my driver gleefully recount how he had been Tim Curry's driver during the shooting of Ridley Scott's *Legend*. Rob Bottin's magnificent make-up for Darkness involved Tim in an eight hour, ten piece application from head to waist, topped off with three foot long horns. 'Oh, yes,' my driver enthused, 'the closer we got to the studio, I could see he was getting quite twitchy and restless, sat just where you are now. He seemed to be in quite a bad way by the end of the shoot.' 'Really?' I muttered, reaching for another cigarette and trying not to twitch.

I don't think I was at my most co-operative on these mornings. The nurse came round one day and gave us pills of Vitamin B-something, which sent me completely loopy. I remember threatening to drop Geoff's Filofax out of the window and him finally strapping me to the chair with gaffer tape. The consummate professional goes to work.

And then there was the hanging around. Now this is part and parcel of making movies. The casual visitor to a film set would gain the impression that you make films by standing in huddles chatting and drinking coffee. 'This is what they pay me for,' Laurence Olivier once observed. 'The acting comes free, but for this they pay.' But to bring

you in before the little birds have pulled their heads from under their wings, slap a bunch of latex on your head so you can't even enjoy a proper breakfast — 'We need to bring you in at four so you're camera-ready when the crew arrives, because you're definitely first shot up' — and then leave you hanging around for twelve hours before you see a camera, by which time everyone's rushing to get done because they want to go home, and you know you've got another hour in the chair before *you* can leave...

I become a nomad in the make-up. I find it hard to be in my own company with that face staring out of the mirror all the time and the pins make it pretty well impossible to sleep. But I also find it difficult to just relax and hang out with people. They don't see me, they see Pinhead and tend to respond to him, not me. So I do a little of both, wandering here and there, dragging my soul behind me. It's a response I found that Robert Englund shares:

'I became a pacer. I would get into this rotation thing, like jogging round the walls of the soundstage. Stop to eat what I could off the craft service table, another circuit, back to craft service, coffee through a straw, then another march around. It gets insane. Very strange.'

And as much as I might want someone to put their arms around me and say, 'There, there, it's all right, I understand', the one thing guaranteed to drive me to screaming point would be people constantly asking if I'm alright!

All of this notwithstanding, when I *did* get in front of the camera, I was still having as much fun playing the character, and still learning about the movies all the time.

Hard on the heels of *Hellhound* came *Nightbreed*, which Clive directed and adapted from his own novel, *Cabal*. I was cast as Lylesburg, the Moses-like keeper of the law in Midian, the underworld the Breed had created as a sanctuary for themselves. Full prosthetics again, and a brilliant make-up designed and applied by Mark Coulier, another member of the Image team, which had swollen to huge proportions to cope with the dizzying array of creatures being produced.



Chris Figg was producing again and we were back at Pinewood with an almost identical crew. All of which helped towards a constant sense of dislocation for me. Although the Lylesburg make-up was as far removed from Pinhead as possible, the application was identical, and the characters had enough similarities to promote a certain confusion. I remember nodding off in the make-up chair one morning and waking up convinced I was still making

Hellhound.

Nevertheless, I have tremendously rich memories of filming *Nightbreed*. It was quickly apparent that what we were making was not a standard horror film. It was no surprise to me that as fast as Clive had been thrust into the pigeonhole marked The Future of

As Lylesburg in Nightbreed.

Horror, he'd be fighting to get out, or at least to quietly turn that pigeon-hole into something quite different. There was a mythic, almost epic quality to the sets and some of the scenes that put me more in mind of something like Fellini's *Satyricon* than current horror films. We were also shooting a very faithful adaptation of the novel: a dark fantasy; a romance for girl and dead guy.

Although the film as it stands is like no other movie, it was a disappointment to me. It seems that the basic problem for 20th Century Fox back in LA was that the monsters were the good guys. Whatever the reason, they messed around with the movie endlessly, partly restructuring the narrative and completely changing the ending, relentlessly forcing Clive back into that pigeon-hole. He stayed on board in a typically determined damage limitation exercise and looked half dead when he returned to London.

And can I take this opportunity to disown Lylesburg's voice? I received a very curt call from LA to tell me it was being revoiced. I was obviously deemed not important enough to be flown out for the purpose. I would have laughed heartily at any suggestion (it was never made) that I should play him with a German accent. I can only suppose that some executive fell out of bed one morning, and thought, 'Jeepers! Lylesburg. *Lyltsburg!* He's German!!' Probably.

When you're playing a part in make-up or a mask that conceals your face as an actor, your physical and vocal performance becomes crucially important to you, as it had been for me with Pinhead. To lose it is to feel that it's not you on screen at all. Actually, on the first day of *Hellraiser* I was still unsure of what was going to happen with Pinhead's voice. Did New World want him American? Would I get to loop it? Would the voice be treated? And I was getting no definite answers, I suspect because nobody else knew either at that stage. So I went for broke on day one and it seemed to work. Although the voice is

electronically altered (I'm often asked, 'Is that really you?') and I use a voice below my natural register to play it anyway, I still know it's me: my phrasing and emphasis. It's my stamp on the character. There are constant whispers about a director's cut of *Nightbreed*, so maybe one day...

In April 1989, midway through filming *Nightbreed*, I received an invitation from *Fangoria* magazine to be a guest at their Weekend of Horrors convention in Los Angeles. It just about fitted into the schedule, so off I went.

This was my first visit to the States. I was wildly excited. For an Englishman growing up in the sixties and seventies, with a love of pop, soul and rock music, films and television — not to mention the poems of Walt Whitman and the work of Poe, Melville, Fitzgerald, Chandler, Runyon *et al* — America is a mythical country in your head. From the first time I heard Paul Simon's line about the cars on the New Jersey Turnpike — 'They've all gone to look for America' — a million dreams had been spinning in my head. It hasn't let me down. Every town is a song, every corner a movie set. The first time I saw New York, I couldn't believe that the manhole covers at the intersections really steamed. I thought it was just a moody effect laid on for the movies.

But as I stepped off the plane at LAX that first time, reeling from a forty degree hike in temperature and very impressed that Kenny Jones, The Small Faces' drummer, had arrived on the same flight, my principal concern was getting past Immigration. I had heard enough horror stories from other people to have come equipped with a letter from Chris Figg stating that I had to be back in England, my letter of invitation from *Fangoria* and so forth. I don't say I had come armed with these things, because I was very aware that it was *they* who were armed. Real guns. Not the movies now.

'Next' drawled the voice and I crossed the yellow line.

These guys are cool. Their uniforms are sexy and they know it. The glance over the shades is just long enough to let you know you're being studied, never long enough to put you at ease. He looked at my passport and landing card.

'Okay, Doug,' he said, emphasising the name in a way which suggested it was quite the dumbest he'd heard on this shift. 'What's the purpose of the business that brings you to the United States today?'

'Well,' I began, feeling absurdly English. 'I'm attending a convention here in Los Angeles.' And let's just leave it at that, shall we?

'Oh, really?' More than a hint of disbelief there. Stop sweating, for God's sake, you look like you're hiding something. 'And who's, uh, organising this, uh, convention?'

Here we go.

'Er, well, it's, um, a magazine, actually. Called *Fangoria*.'

I have seldom seen a human face transform so fast. You might say the mask cracked.

'No way! *Fangoria* magazine? I read that all the time!' He flipped to the front of the passport. 'You're an actor? You work in horror movies? What've you been in? Maybe I seen you?'

'Well, do you know the *Hellraiser* movies?'

'*Hellraiser*? Oh, man, that's my favourite! But I don't remember you in that.'

'Don't you? You know the guy with the pins in his...'

'No kiddin', man! You're Pinhead?' Handshake, handshake.

'Would you mind signing your autograph?' Sign, sign.

'Thank you so much, sir.' Stamp, stamp. 'You're all set, Doug. You enjoy your stay, and welcome to Los Angeles.'

An autograph within thirty minutes of being on American soil. Good start.

Tony Randel, who was also a guest at the convention, called to say he wanted to take me for breakfast in Beverly Hills for my first morning in LA. When we got back to the

hotel, there was a long line of people registering for the show. I was aware of nudgings and whisperings and glances in our direction. They must recognise Tony, I thought. I said, 'I'm just going up to my room. I'll be down in a couple of minutes and we'll see what's going on.'

I headed for the elevator, and was besieged. 'Doug! Mr Bradley? Could you sign this? Could I take a picture?' Half an hour later, I collapsed into the elevator, stunned. Two days, a thousand questions and many hours of handshakes and autographs later, I was left in no doubt about the impact I and Pinhead had had on these fans.

As I said earlier, Gunnar Hansen was also attending that convention and we met in unusual circumstances, but I was entirely unaware of this until I interviewed him for this book at another convention in North Carolina in 1996. This is my transcript, complete with your author's embarrassment...

GH: The first convention I did was in LA. It was a *Fangoria* show. And when I got there, I walked...

DB: When's this? '88?

GH: It was around then. Oh, wait, you were there.

DB: Really? Oh then its '89. Really? You were at that show?

GH: Yes! And it was so funny, because my niece was a real big fan of yours, and do you remember...? Look, I so little understood the perks of stardom that I wanted to get an autograph from you for my niece, so what did I do? I got in line. I stood in line for you! And all these guys are standing in line with me thinking: 'Wow!' But when I first got there, I walked out into the dealer's room. Now, one of the advantages for me — it's maybe the same for you — is that people just don't know who I am. People recognise me more on the street now than they did twenty years ago. But even so, I walked onto the floor of the dealer's room and immediately a group of people started to circle around me, and the entire time I walked round that room, there was this tight circle of ten to fifteen people right there just in

amazement that I was out on the dealer's floor, just walking around. I mean, I liked it, I thought: 'Wow, this is great,' but another part of me was saying: 'Whoa! What is this?'

DB: But this really is weird, because that was also my first convention, and I was having exactly the same experience, I mean, word for word, *precisely* the same experience. But I don't even... did we meet? Did we spend time together?

GH: No, we didn't. Not at all. You have to understand my point of view. I came down the line and said, 'Could I get an autograph, Mr Bradley, for my niece?'

DB: And I, to my shame, didn't know who you were!

GH: But why should you? Why should you know who I was?

DB: You knew who / was!

GH: But there was no reason for us to have a conversation. As I saw it, you were Doug Bradley, the movie star...

DB: [Tries to speak. Collapses in hysterics.]

GH: No! No! I'm serious! I was just Gunnar Hansen, the guy who came from Maine.

DB: Oh, God, this is funny!

GH: Yes. And everybody thought. I was such an okay guy because I stand in line like everybody else.

DB: Just another fan-boy!

GH: Yes! But only because I didn't know any better!

DB: I hope I was nice to you.

GH: Yes you were. You looked right through me, like we always do.

DB: Oh, stop! 'Who's this to?' [laughs]

GH: 'And thank you for coming!'

[laughter eventually subsides]

I always look forward to going to conventions. Apart from a chance to meet colleagues — where else can you have breakfast with Brinke Stevens, lunch with Leatherface and dinner with Darth Vader? — I enjoy the contact with the fans. As the people who pay the money to see the movies and thus create the profits, they indirectly pay the wages.

There is a popular conception that they're either crazed fanatics or sad anoraks in need of a life. I won't suggest there aren't a few of those around, and while it is true that the standard issue horror fan is white, male, fifteen to twenty-five and usually wearing an AC/DC or Iron Maiden T-shirt, they come in all ages and from all walks of life. Their approach to the work is generally informed and intelligent, so it's always interesting to take their responses on board.

It's also a little humbling to have people tell you they've travelled right across the States to be at a convention because they heard you're going to be there. Mystifying, but humbling. It behoves you to take a little time and trouble with them in return. I must have been doing something right, since I was surprised and delighted to hear from editor Tony Timpone later that year that the readers had voted to install me in *Fangoria*'s Hall of Fame.

Things seemed to be on a roll. Pete had already produced a first draft for *Hellraiser III* — it was called *Hell on Earth*, but bears no relation at all to the story eventually filmed. Film Futures, the company Clive and Chris formed, had any number of projects planned, two further *Nightbreed* pictures among them. These were intended as complements to two further *Cabal* books. *Nightbreeds* relative failure at the box office (it has now developed cult status), and the fact that Fox's movie had departed in important details from *Cabal*, may have nixed those anyway. Two substantial spanners now landed in the works, however, which put paid to all of them for some time.

Film Futures came unstuck during the entanglements of *Nightbreed*, and, despite the success of both *Hellraisers*, New World went under, taking the rights to the series with them (Clive retained only the literary rights). This left a neat legal conundrum: If New World owns the rights, and New World doesn't exist, where are the rights?

It would take two years and several false dawns before Transatlantic Pictures, a sort of phoenix from the New

World ashes, would finally get *Hellraiser III: Hell on Earth* into production. So in late summer 1991, now the only British member of the cast, I flew out to North Carolina to start filming. Pete had written the script, from a storyline by himself and Tony Randel. Tony was set to direct the movie, but had a falling out with the producers and was replaced by ex-pat Brit Anthony Hickox, whose father Douglas had directed Vincent Price in *Theatre of Blood*.

I was surrounded by familiar faces, though. Pete was with us throughout the shoot, Bob and his crew were again handling the effects and make-up, Steve Hardie, production designer of genius from *Nightbreed*, was there, as was Steve Jones, unit publicist as he had been on both *Hellraisers* and *Nightbreed*. Geoff Portass had moved on and-so Paul Jones now had Pinhead responsibilities, with the make-up re-designed as a

two-piece application.

As well as being the first time I'd made a movie in the States ('You'll hate it', I'd been warned. 'You'll love it', others enthused. It was one of the happiest working experiences I've had), it was also my first outing as Pinhead as the star of the show. It being also three and a half years since I'd last played him, I was distinctly nervous. I'd spent a lot of time talking about the character, but I was gripped with a neurosis that I'd got over-familiar with him and wouldn't be able to do it any more. It proved to be only neurosis. With the make-up and costume on, he was waiting for me once again.

I also had the challenge of playing a dual role, since this movie explored the story of the army officer introduced in *Hellhound*, now christened Elliott Spenser — named for two poets, albeit with one of them deliberately mis-spelt — and located in the trenches of the First World War.



Paul Jones applying my makeup for Hellraiser III...

For the scene in which Elliott and Pinhead confront each other, I had a schizophrenic night in which I started out as Elliott and then went into the latex to do the answering shots. The list of volunteers to double Pinhead had got pretty long, all sizes and shapes of guys trying to convince Tony Hickox that they were a dead

spit for me. The job went, not surprisingly, to my stand-in. I arrived on set, feeling very dapper in my officer's uniform and completely focused on Elliott, and the first thing I saw was... Pinhead. I had never seen the character in the flesh before, only in mirrors, photos or on screen. It came as a shock. It actually made me feel angry. This was my world, and I really didn't like the notion of somebody else inhabiting it. I hadn't realised until then how possessive of the character I had become.

At one point during the first half of the night, Tony queried with me what an appropriate response for Pinhead would be. I thought about it, demonstrated, stepped back onto my marks and promptly delivered Elliott's next line in Pinhead's voice.

...but who needs a make-up artist? In the make-up trailer on location, North Carolina.



Hell on Earth also gave me the chance to experience the world of special effects make-up from the other side of the fence, so to speak. While we were doing night shoots, I used to go down to the set even if I wasn't called: it was

the easiest way to stay awake all night (and get a decent meal at one o'clock in the morning). Bob Keen, who was directing second unit, was preparing to shoot the 'Camerahead' Cenobite's telephoto lens blasting through the head of a guy on the street. Steve Painter of Image Animation, who had assisted with my make-up on *Hellhound* and was doing so again, was playing the victim. With first and second units shooting concurrently, Bob suddenly realised that he was short of manpower. Nobody was available to apply Steve's make-up.

A silly thought formed itself in my head, and I suddenly found myself thinking aloud. 'I'm just standing around here, doing nothing,' I said. 'I'll do it.' Bob looked at me, quizzically. 'Alright,' he said, 'You're on.'

Steve and I repaired to the make-up trailer and I set to, with Steve talking me through each step. I had to build up a circular ridge on his forehead, using mortician's wax, blend it in and paint it. The centre of the wound would later be 'morph- ed' out by computer, to create the effect of a hole right through his head. I assumed that was that. I was wrong.

I then had to gather my make-up artist's kit together and escort him back to set. There, I dressed fake blood into the wound and Steve did his bit: turning, screaming, and falling onto the sidewalk. 'Pretty good,' I thought, 'I enjoyed that.' Wrong again. 'Cut,' called Bob. 'Okay, not bad. We'll go again. Doug, clean up the blood and re-set.' Suddenly, I'm on my hands and knees, cleaning blood off the paving slabs and Steve's face before re-applying fresh blood. Take two. Take three. Four. Five. By the end of it, as I took Steve back to the trailer to remove the make-up, I was exhausted but inordinately proud. My respect for make-up artists had just risen even higher.

Check out the credits on the movie. Special Effects Makeup Crew: Bill Bradley (my middle name is William). I was surprised to see the great Bill get a second credit on

the fourth film. Make-up Supervisor Gary Tunncliffe had sneaked him in because I'd removed my own make-up a few times when he was short of hands.

Hellraiser: Bloodline came along in 1994 with Dimension (an arm of Miramax Films) producing. We shot it in LA, which, as someone pointed out to me, meant that I'd now collected the three woods — Crickle, Pine and Holly — along the way. Familiar faces were getting ever fewer.

Gary Tunncliffe, who had worked on my make-up on *Hell on Earth* reshoots and was now running Image Animation's Los Angeles outfit, took over Pinhead chores in addition to supervising all the make-up effects. Seven years earlier, when *Hellraiser* came out, Gary had been sitting in the stalls, looking at Pinhead on the screen and thinking, 'I'd like to do that.' Gerry Lively joined us as Director of Photography, as he had been in North Carolina. Pete, who had produced his third *Hellraiser* script from Clive's storyline, was around, as was Clive himself. He was also executive producer but, with perfect bad timing caused by delays in getting *Bloodline* up and running, he was directing *Lord of Illusions* at exactly the same time, and only a few blocks away from us in Culver City. With *Candyman: Farewell to the Flesh* also underway elsewhere, you couldn't move in his house for video cassettes of dailies from three movies. Typically, he often gave up time on his day off (we shot Sundays, he didn't) to come down to set, but the amount of time he could give to the film was necessarily limited.

Gary retained a two-piece design for the make-up, and he and I agreed to take the look as close to Geoff's original as possible. Having loosened my performance as Pinhead for the third film to match the changed nature of the character (freed from the rules of the box), I was clear that the end of the previous film had re-established the status quo, and I wanted to take my beat for *Bloodline* from my first performance.

It was a chaotic shoot. Clive's story, beginning in eighteenth

Looking like this? In this town, no problem. Not making life easy for Gary as he works on my make-up during Hellraiser: Bloodline.



century France and winding up in the future, in space (probably the last place I ever expected to Find Pinhead: one thing you never get with Clive is predictability!), was by some distance the most ambitious and complicated of the series. I was by no means confident, as I flew to LA, that we could do this on roughly the same time and money as the previous film, as we seemed to be attempting. On top of this, if it could go wrong, it did. Fire, flood, strike, chickenpox, it was like the plot of a Dr Phibes movie: which plague next?

Valiantly attempting to hold all this together was Kevin Yagher, directing his first feature after cutting his teeth on HBO's *Tales from the Crypt*. I had a great time with Kevin — he's one of the funniest people I've met — and I would love to work with him again in less fraught circumstances. But, by the middle of the shoot, with precious days lost and time running out, it was difficult to know whether he was waving or drowning. It was no surprise to me that I was back in LA twice during 1995 for reshoots and additional photography. Kevin was unable to direct these, and so Joe Chappelle, who



As Mr Brinkstone had just directed in *Proteus*.

Halloween: The Curse of Michael Myers, took over. And since neither wished to take overall credit for directing the picture, Alan Smithee is the name attached to the movie. It is a great honour for me to be associated with one of the truly legendary figures of Hollywood, whose career

since his debut with *Death of a Gunfighter* in 1969 has been one of the most diverse in cinema history.

The delays meant that the movie was not released in the States until March 1996.¹ I recently attended its European premiere at the Fantafestival in Rome (all four films were screened over a few days) where it was enthusiastically received, and I was presented with the Festival's Best Actor award.

While *Bloodline* was untangling itself in America, I made a 'cameo' appearance in another full prosthetic role in the British sci-fi movie *Proteus*, directed by Bob Keen. This was not a monster role. I played Brinkstone, the Mr Big behind an attempt to find the elixir of life which has gone badly wrong. He's ninety-odd years old, and rather than find an old actor, Bob decided to use make-up and invited me to play it. I was intrigued by the possibility and accepted. But I did have misgivings. Reluctance would perhaps be closer to the mark.

The night before filming, I remember sitting at home with my wife, moaning away. 'Why am I doing this? It's only one scene. I'm dead as soon as I arrive. The money's not great. Do I really want to go and have all that stuff stuck on my head again?' I carried this attitude with me — well concealed, I hope — right up to the point that the make-up was finished and I got the costume on. I went over to a full-length mirror, and all the attitude melted away.

If anything, this was even weirder than seeing Pinhead or Lylesburg for the first time, because this was real. An aged version of myself, with hints of my grandfather about it, looked back at me. Having dealt with the intimations of mortality this provoked, my only thought was, 'Let's go to work. Let's go and play!'

Chapter Twenty

The Further Adventures of Pinhead

Angels and Demons: Dentists and Teachers

P

laytime came around again in 1999, with the arrival in the post of the screenplay for *Hellraiser: Inferno*. It was accompanied by a letter from a Dimension executive, indicating how excited they were about the new script. So, it claimed, was Clive. It invited me to reprise my role as Pinhead, if I wanted to. I paused at that. Was I being paranoid, or did that sentence seem to carry on: 'of course, if you don't want to, no-one here gives a stuff'?

Nevertheless, I dived eagerly into the script. At first I was excited by it, for here was a story that did not initially suggest *Hellraiser* at all until the cops arrive at the first murder scene. Anyone who had not seen any of the first four films would still be none the wiser, but for those in the know, one glance at the scene — the circle of candles, the presence of the puzzle box, etc — and you would know exactly what went on here: the acquisition of the Lament Configuration, the struggle to open it, the arrival of Pinhead and cohorts, the hooks and chains. Very clever. Unfortunately, I felt the screenplay failed to develop from such a promising start, not helped by the fact that the central character, Detective Thorne, was so dislikeable. I couldn't see where the audience's sympathies were supposed to lie, and I felt there was a lack of dramatic tension. I had the growing feeling that what I was reading was a pre-existing screenplay about a

screwed-up cop, which had been turned into a *Hellraiser* script (I would later learn that this was precisely the case). Allied to this was a nagging question as I reached the halfway point and beyond: Where is Pinhead? He did eventually turn up, but in just two briefer-than-brief appearances occupying maybe two or three pages out of a hundred-some.

Now, I am no egomaniac. Ironically, if Dimension had sought out my thoughts and opinions earlier, I would have been advocating a reduction in screen time for Pinhead, because I believe in the law of diminishing returns. After all, when the character was introduced so powerfully and memorably, in the first film, he probably appears on screen for no more than ten minutes. He retains a great sense of mystery, and from that flows charisma and power. Three films further on, audiences had seen a great deal more of the character, and I was concerned that much of that

intrigue had been stripped away. I have to say from my ongoing encounters with fans at conventions and signings, and from fan mail, I was clearly out of step with them; they just can't get enough of him. But I continued to be a believer in quality over quantity. Less is more.

But not that much less. Whether anyone liked it or not, Pinhead had become synonymous with the *Hellraiser* films, and to reduce him to a walk-on bit part made no sense to me or anyone I discussed it with. A phone call to Clive confirmed that his 'excitement' was being greatly exaggerated, to say the least. Indeed, if this movie went ahead, it would do so without

any involvement from him. I relayed my responses in a letter back to Dimension, but it was clear that they were not anticipating any creative input from me — 'Take it or leave it' would be a precise summary of the position.

I took it. I figured if I dropped out of the loop at that point, I would struggle to get back in. There was a very simple bottom line as well. Did I want to sit down and watch somebody else play Pinhead? Emphatically not. And so I boarded the plane to Los Angeles for my three days filming, determined to make the best of it. If I'm in, I'm in.

Reading the screenplay, I had also felt uneasy about the distinctly avuncular, moralistic tone that Pinhead had been given, particularly in his 'summing-up' speech towards the end of the film. Whatever else he may be, I have never exactly seen him as a moral guardian. I also felt that some of the writing for



Pinhead was too loose and colloquial: phrases such as 'you've reached the end of the line' seemed to me to be distinctly at odds with what we'd come to expect from the articulate mouth of Hell's Black Pope. On arrival in LA, I communicated these concerns to Scott Derrickson, the director and co-writer, who told me, 'Writing for Pinhead, finding the right tone for him, was the hardest thing we faced.' With his consent and support I rewrote

The 100th application birthday cake on Inferno with Gary Tunncliffe.

my speeches, doing my best to capture the darkly sardonic tone Clive and Pete had consistently hit in the previous films.

During my three-day engagement I reached my hundredth day in the Pinhead make-up. As I half expected he would, Gary Tunnicliffe made it one to remember. He had made 'Access All Areas' badges for the entire crew and, as I settled into the dentist's chair that morning, he presented me with my telegram from Her Majesty the Queen (it's a tradition in the UK that everyone who passes the century mark receives congratulations from the sitting monarch). Friends dropped by, including Steve Hardie, production designer on earlier

Hellraisers, who gave me an enormous blood-drenched nail set in a frame. At lunch, there was champagne and a huge birthday cake in the shape of a bust of Pinhead, with candles instead of nails.

Inferno also reunited me with Craig Sheffer (playing Detective Thorne), who had starred in *Nightbreed* back in 1989. None of my doubts about the movie reflect in any way on Craig, who put in sterling work. Certainly, the film's portrayal of Thorne's descent into his personal hell, condemned to live out his torment in a perpetual time loop, sits firmly in *Hellraiser* territory. It is only my personal opinion that this is the least satisfactory film of the series to date.

It was also the first film of the series not to be given a theatrical release. I have mixed feelings about this. Given the choice, I would always prefer to see movies released in the cinema and seen on the big screen, where they belong. Ten years earlier, the phrase 'straight to video' was fairly transparent code for 'it's crap'. But the explosion of the small screen market and, in particular, the arrival of laserdisc, DVD and home cinema systems had changed all that. After all, the vast majority of people who see a film (and this is, perhaps, particularly true of horror films) will see it on the small screen.

Certainly, the decision not to put *Inferno* in the theatres was not one based on quality: I think it had been taken before the film was made. It did irritate me, though, that having decided to relegate Pinhead to such a minor involvement in the story, Dimension nevertheless issued the film on video and DVD with a full-face image of the character on the cover.

Perhaps, in the colon-fest that horror sequels have become (*Exorcist II: The Heretic*, *Halloween: The Curse of Michael Myers*, etc), we should have struck a blow for Punctuation Liberation and called ourselves *Hellraiser? Infernof* It's a rhetorical question, by the way: it doesn't need answering and I don't propose to. Damn these colons: they get everywhere.

And so I once again bade farewell to pins, glue and latex and returned to London, not knowing whether I had indeed reached the end of the line.

Somewhere in the early '90s, I had attended a party in London for the launch of the Sci-Fi Channel in Europe. In the midst of the festivities, I was tapped on the shoulder. The tapper introduced himself as Tony Luke, launched into a spiel that identified him as an aspiring film-

maker, and asked if I would be interested in doing a voiceover for him. I suggested he contact me through my agent and moved on. Conversations like this are fairly common: one listens politely and (I hope) interestedly, throws out the 'a' word and forgets about it. And, ninety-nine times out of a hundred, that's that.

Some little time later, however, a package arrived from Tony. Along with his letter of re-introduction — which included the frank admission that he had little or no money — was an

outline and a script for a proposed TV pilot entitled *Archangel Thunderbird*. It was not the best script I've ever read, but from the title on into

this proposed live action/animation project, I was hooked. A fascinating role being offered to me (nay, written for me — flattery goes a long, long way): Dr John Churchill — academic archaeologist meets DoctorWho. And the story of the Knights Templar, the empty tomb of Jesus, demonic forces devouring the universe, and a girl with a six-way split personality and the power to raise the giant warrior angels capable of saving us, did the rest. I met up with Tony again. I liked him, his ideas and his ambition. There were distinct echoes of the way Clive and I had begun our working relationship twenty years earlier. Money was not an issue. If doing the

Hellraiser movies taught me anything it is that money is never a reason for saying no to things. It may be a very good reason for saying yes to things you're not very excited about, but not vice versa.

The shoot was not without its problems, but the animation process — a mix of good old Ray Harryhausen-style stop-motion and basic CGI — went smoothly and the results were as intriguing and stylish as I'd hoped. It was screened on the Sci-Fi Channel, where it garnered more than respectable numbers, and also at a couple of conventions to enthusiastic response. The Sci-Fi Channel was supposed to be committing to a full-length film, but instead we sat in a number of meetings which appeared to go round in ever-decreasing circles before finally grinding to a halt.

And that might have been as far as my working relationship with Tony went. But some time later he called me to say he was about to go ahead with a project called

Dominator, a full-length CGI film, and wanted to bring me on board not only to voice one of the main characters, but also as executive producer.

Dominator had begun life in 1993 when Tony and writer Alan Grant achieved the impossible and sold a British manga comic strip back to the Japanese. Alan had already written the script for the movie when I came on board. I was to voice two of the main characters: Doc Payne — a good guy — undertaker extraordinaire and dabbler in the occult, with a foot in government circles; and Lord Desecrator, very much the bad guy, whose voice may possibly sound familiar to *Hellraiser* fans.

I set about helping Tony cast the other character voices, including Dani Filth, guiding light of the death metal band Cradle of Filth, as Dominator, Lord of the Sonic Regions of Hell and the last word in rock gods; BBC Radio 1 DJs Marc and Lard as a comic demonic double act; Alex Cox (director of *Repo Man*, amongst others) as Bishop, the slimy politician in league with the devil; and British horror stalwart Ingrid Pitt, whom I had got to know and love on the convention circuit.

The finished film was released on DVD in the UK at the end of 2003, and both sales and critical response were good. *Dominator* has also been screened at a number of festivals,

including Cannes, and was voted the Best Animated Feature at the Manchester Festival of Fantastic Films in 2003.

Working with Tony has been one of the great pleasures of my professional life, and his determination and single-mindedness to complete the film (which included not letting a little thing like a life-threatening illness get in the way) is an example which will always stay with me. I am now very much part of Tony's production company, Renga (J^aP^anese for 'linked image'), and its future plans. As I write this, Tony is working with Alan Grant on the script for a second *Dominator* film.

The sixth *Hellraiser* film came along in late 2000. When I started reading the script, I was surprised to see that the main female character was called Kirsty. "Wow!" I thought, "They're bringing Kirsty Cotton back. Great!" Kirsty, played by Ashley

Laurence, was of course the heroine of the first two films. I had always thought that Kirsty and Pinhead had unfinished business and that there was certainly a future *Hellraiser* film to be made around that. Where had Kirsty gone after those traumatic encounters with Cenobitedom in her father's house and in the Channard Institute? Would she have put it behind her and moved on, or would she just have declined into incurable insanity? Where, when and how would Pinhead choose to return to demand she settle her debts? As I read on, however, delight gave way to puzzlement. Whoever this Kirsty was, she clearly wasn't Kirsty Cotton.

Overall, I liked the screenplay much more than *Inferno*, but this issue kept irritating me.

Negotiation of my deal for the picture having been left until rather late in the day, we were quite close to the wire when I finally got the chance to speak with Rick Bota, the new man on the bridge of the good ship *Hellraiser*. I liked Rick immediately: he had a creative enthusiasm for the movie, and he also talked at some length about how he was determined to get Pinhead 'right', which, as you can imagine, was music to my ears.



*3am Eternal: I think
I'm promising the 3rd
AD that I'll be ready in
two minutes.*

My feeling is that there is no
right or wrong way to do
Pinhead: there is only good or
bad, imaginative or prosaic. In
these latter days of the

Hellraiser movies, with Clive having no
involvement, I've become looked upon as the
caretaker of the mythology. Except that there is no
rule

book, no hide-bound set of dos and don'ts. And I know Clive well enough to know that if there were, he'd be the first to rip it up and throw it away. Sending Pinhead into space is an example I've already cited. Here's another. At some point I was told that there had been a suggestion of re-designing Pinhead's costume to give him something resembling papal robes. My immediate response was, 'No. He is as he is and it works. Leave it alone.' Gary subsequently told me that the

suggestion had come from Clive, possibly during *Bloodline*. He showed me sketches he had done (Gary is a hugely talented artist). There was Pinhead swathed in delicately hued flowing robes: pinks, crimsons, purples; the colours of freshly exposed internal organs. It looked amazing and, of course, I suddenly thought, 'I wish we'd done it.' In fact, I suspect it may have worked better on the page than it would have done on screen, but the point stands: sometimes the most unlikely, the most absurd, the most apparently wrong thing to do is, in fact, the right thing.

Towards the end of what was a fairly lengthy conversation with Rick, I raised the Kirsty issue. Rick told me they had considered making her Kirsty Cotton, and he would still love to do that, but for some reason they had had trouble contacting Ashley. I have kept in touch with Ashley over the years, and offered to contact her myself. As I expected, she was hugely enthusiastic and was quickly on board. Last minute revisions were made to the script to accommodate this new element and, in early 2001, we gathered in Vancouver, Canada, to set the ball rolling on

Hellraiser: Hellseeker

Those last minute revisions were, in fact, an ongoing feature of the shoot. Working with Rick, I wrote the new scene for the confrontation between Pinhead and Kirsty, which often involved sheets of paper being ferried between the set and the make-up trailer by breathless PAs: 'Rick says he likes this bit, doesn't like that bit. This is too long.' 'Tell him I like everything he doesn't and I can't cut any of that, it's crucial to the scene.' 'Hey, I may not be able to write like a writer but I can certainly talk like one. Actually, I made that last bit up: generally, we saw eye to eye. We did have a basic disagreement about how much reference should be made to the previous films. I argued that Pinhead and Kirsty couldn't meet again without alluding to their history. Rick, quite rightly, was anxious that this must be a stand-alone movie and make sense to anyone who had not seen either of the first two films. The solution was simple. I wrote it, we filmed it, Rick cut it out. In fact, as we were filming it, I came to a particular point in the dialogue and thought, 'Damn it, that's his cut.' I was right. Welcome to being a Hollywood writer, Bradley. Fortunately, though, the joy of releasing on DVD is that the stuff doesn't just land on the cutting-room floor and exit with the trash: the rest of the scene is there in the Extras bit.

From the third film onwards, my first day back in the makeup has always been accompanied by a mixture of feelings: elation at getting to explore the character again, coupled with a sense of dread and depression, which — borrowing from Winston Churchill — I call the Black Dog. I arrive for work, happy to be back on a movie set; old friends to greet, new friends to meet. Visit the set, cup of coffee and a smoke, hug and kiss, 'Morning!' 'Morning!' And then the dread words: Doug, Gary's ready for you in the make-up trailer.' I'm suddenly possessed of the need to do a hundred urgent things. Oh, my weak bladder. Do you know how long you can take to tie a shoelace? Finally, I climb the steps (the gallows' steps) into the trailer. Gary turns, his features flitting between his beatific human ones and an evil, grinning skull. Good morning, Doug. Please take a seat.' The dentist's chair is a bottomless pit, waiting to swallow me. And there, in a corner, is the most awful sight in the world: the make-up pieces, draped over a dummy head, so innocent and ordinary. My eye sweeps across the instruments of torture laid out in neat and orderly ranks. They may look like brushes and tweezers, pots of paint and glue, but don't be deceived: they are the make-up room's answer to scalpels and thumbscrews, brimstone and treacle. I cry to the

heavens, 'Why me, God? Why me?' But silence is the only reply, unless that distant, malicious cackle is the mocking voice of the Almighty. But no, it's just Gary clearing his throat. 'Doug? I really do need to get started.'

The fact is that on Day One, I can't get past the misery of it all. The glue, the prodding and poking. Don't open your eyes for the next ten minutes. Don't speak for the next fifteen. Wearing a leotard to work, for God's sake. Hauling the jacket on and off between takes. The misery of lunch. The dumb jokes about pincushions and painkillers. Tripping over the skirt. And an hour of peeling and scrubbing when it's finally all over. It's no way for a grown man to make a living. But once I'm over this, it's fine, and I'm ready to have fun.

I had a great time making *Hellseeker* and exploring the city of Vancouver. And I felt the movie, with its multi-layered, puzzle-box-like plot, was a welcome return to form in the series.

Somewhere in the mid- to late nineties, I was contacted by another aspiring film-maker, Frazer Lee. He sent me a short horror script entitled *On Edge*, adapted from Christopher Fowler's short story. I was not familiar with Chris's story, but this dark little tale grabbed my attention immediately. Frazer was inviting me to play Dr Matthews, a psychotic wannabe dentist who refuses to let a little thing like a total lack of anything resembling a dental qualification stand in his way. As he explains himself, he moves into an area, identifies all the dental surgeries and stakes them out. And from time to time, he gets lucky. He locates a surgery with an absentee dentist and an impatient patient who sees a well-spoken man in a white coat and doesn't stop to ask questions. So Dr Matthews locks himself in with the patient and proceeds to practise his own distinctly avant-garde version of the dental arts: 'Open wide' meets *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre*.

I met up with Frazer and his producer Joseph Alberti. They had formed a production company called Robber Barons. (Historical note: You know Robin Hood's motto: 'Steal from the rich to give to the poor'? Well, Medieval England's robber barons worked in reverse. Latterly the term has come to be applied to unscrupulous businessmen — the Robert Maxwells of this world — accruing vast wealth to themselves at other people's expense. Why Frazer and Joseph felt this applied to movie producers, I cannot begin to imagine.) The wit evident in their self-styling was further evident over a lunch meeting: I liked them both and agreed to sign up for the movie.

So we gathered at a real dental surgery in London's Covent Garden. This was a kind of aversion therapy for me. I do not get on well with dentist's drills or hypodermic syringes. Just the sound of the former is enough to bring me out in a cold sweat. And the latter is subject to an Immutable Law of Cinema which states that every time anyone has an injection in a film, it has to be shown

in a long, lingering close-up. For *On Edge* I was required to work with both. At the same time. Some of the scenes were quite a juggling exercise: latex gloves, drill, needle and saliva drain. It's a well-known feat that you're pushing your luck if you ask an actor to walk and talk at the same time. Here, Frazer was just out of order.

As Dr Matthews, I was, of course, an entirely latex-free zone (apart from the gloves). Not so my co-star, Charlie Boorman. I watched as Bob Keen applied to Charlie the prosthetics that would represent my crazed handiwork. This is always a strange moment. Part of me wants to run around, punching the air, shouting, 'Yes! Yes! Suffer, mortal, suffer!' At the same time, it's almost like an out of body experience — I can so empathise with the actor in the chair (for once, literally a

dentist's chair) that I can feel the glue and brushes on my own skin. Yet another part of me turns into Nurse Latex, wanting to hold their hand and stroke them through the whole process. Best just to get out of the way entirely, which is exactly what I did.

I greatly enjoyed my few days working on *On Edge* and was more than pleased with the results, so when Frazer contacted me again in 2002 with a script for another short horror film, *Red Lines*, I said yes straight away. This time, I played a teacher — unlike Dr Matthews a bona fide one, but like Dr Matthews a psychotic one — with an unusual (I hope) approach to detention. Both these short films have been well received at festival screenings, garnering a respectable crop of awards and commendations. I remain in close contact with Frazer and Joseph: the Barons have a number of ghastly projects in the works. I hope they reach the light of day and the dark of a cinema.

2002 also saw me make two further outings as Pinhead. Word reached me that Dimension were preparing to make the seventh and eighth films back-to-back in Romania. That was nearly as far as my involvement went, since Dimension seemed to think I would like to do these two movies for the same money they had paid me to make *Hellseeker* — two for the price of one, like some cut-price actors bargain store. Fortunately, we

managed to resolve that little impasse, and so I flew out to Bucharest to start work on *Hellraiser: Deader*. Part 8 was to be called *Hellraiser: Hellworld*. How about a big round of applause to welcome back those colons?

Gary was again in charge of my make-up, as well as again being overall SFX supervisor. The other piece of good news for me was that Rick Bota would be directing both films. Knowing that we were both singing from the same song sheet and we wouldn't have to do the 'how do you do Pinhead?' dance was a relief. I also realised this would be the first time in the whole series that I would have worked with the same director twice.

Romania was the fourth country we had now visited on the *Hellraiser* World Tour, and probably not one I would have included on any shortlist. It was also my first venture into central/eastern Europe, so I arrived with no expectations beyond a few lazy prejudices about grim post-Communism, just over ten years on from the collapse of the Soviet Union and the overthrow of Ceaucescu's dictatorship. It was raining as we drove from the airport into Bucharest, and grim was what it seemed.



Our hotel was just across the road from the People's Palace (the second largest building on the planet after the Pentagon), Ceaucescu's ridiculous folly which now houses the Romanian Parliament. I was told the hotel itself was on its way to becoming the Ministry of the Interior, which would explain the vast lobby

Lance Henriksen and friends on the set of Hellworld.

area and the double marble staircase sweeping up to the first floor. It was culture shock each day to leave the luxuries of the hotel behind for the drive to Castel Studios, about forty minutes outside Bucharest. Leaving the city was to leave the modern era behind. My Mercedes would sweep past people who seemed to have stepped straight out of a Brueghel painting making their way up the side of a field with bundles of firewood on their backs.

But why, I can almost hear you asking, were we shooting in Romania at all? It's cheaper, is the simple answer. I had some misgivings about this — exploiting a cheap labour force, etc — but discussing it with members of the crew put it into a different perspective. 'Look,' they said, 'we may be earning money that would insult crew members in London or LA, but in Romanian terms we're making good money. Moreover, there is almost no domestic film production, so without foreign films coming in, we would not have the chance to practise our craft. Keep them coming.'

Now you (who-, when- and wherever you are) may have an advantage over me here, because you may have seen the films. At the time of writing this, neither *Deader* nor

Hellworld have been released. I have seen the former in a not-quite-final cut, but of the latter I have seen only the bits for which I was required to re-record dialogue.

Deader, with its tale of journalist — Pinhead has something of a penchant for them, doesn't he? — Amy Klein (played by Kari Wuhrer) investigating a mysterious cult, is a dark and disturbing film, with Bucharest serving up a suitably bleak backdrop. An honourable addition to

the canon, I feel. *Hellworld*, chronicling the misadventures of a group of fans at a

Hellraiser-themed party is... well, you'll have to tell me. The host of the party was played by Lance Henriksen, whose work I have admired for many years. It was a delight to meet and work with him.

During *Hellworld*, I took Pinhead outdoors for the second time. It had happened previously on *Hell On Earth* for the scenes set in Vietnam, and I had vowed to try to avoid it in future. The make-up is simply not designed, or intended, to be seen in daylight; it needs the carefully controlled lighting conditions of a sound stage. This time, at least, we were filming at night, so artificial lighting could be used. There was one other reason I was not looking forward to it: the cold. Earlier, while discussing Kane Hodder's fire stunt as Jason Voorhees, I mentioned the drawback of letting latex make-up heat up: it takes a long time for it to cool down again. Now, in the woods adjacent to Castel Studios, I would find that the reverse was also true. Temperatures were barely making double figures Fahrenheit (around -12°C). Despite Rick's best efforts to make things as comfortable as possible for me — a heated trailer for me to sit in until the last moment, blankets, etc — there was no getting round the fact that standing in those temperatures was like plunging my head in a bucket of ice.

A final note of disgruntlement about these four films. I mentioned that *Inferno* was a pre-existent script tweaked to become a *Hellraiser* film. The same was certainly true of *Deader*. While there's no reason not to do this, and the respective writers did a good job, it is faintly depressing. It has also tended to increase the repetition of a format in which the plot runs along with the occasional pop-up appearance from Pinhead, before he turns up in the final scenes to wrap things up. It does sometimes feel as though he's been reduced to guest-

star status. Surely someone could come up with an original *Hellraiser* story, further exploring the mythology set up by Clive, rather than simply grafting elements of it on to another plot? Maybe on *Hellraiser 9...*

Chapter TWenty-One

Perennial in the Human soul

W

ill there be a *Hellraiser 9*? Who knows? Not me. For an actor, the only certain thing about the future is uncertainty. The day before Jane Wildgoose's party in 1985, what did I know about Pinhead? Absolutely nothing. When I played the character for the first time, how could I have known that he'd still be with me seventeen years later? When he took me to America for the first time in 1989, could I have guessed I'd be returning close to four times a year every year since then? Appearing on Arsenio and Jay Leno? Meeting the likes of Ringo Starr and Mel Gibson? Accepting awards? Signing dollar bills and Harley Davidsons? Writing this?

The Americans have a phrase for it: 'Go with the flow.'

The flow may lead to more *Hellraisers*. It may not. If it does, I may still be involved: I may not. I'm writing this today, you may be reading it months or years from now. I only wish I could join you and find out some answers.

I'm often asked whether I worry that I will become typecast as Pinhead. It's a silly question: I can't possibly be. What they really mean is, do I worry about having the Pinhead tag follow me around for the rest of my career. I don't. It's a positive rather than a negative association. I am proud of the movies and of my work in them. I know I'll be answering questions about him until I'm incapable of coherent speech, and I'll be happy to do so, but I am a professional actor, not a professional Pinhead, and I really could live without him. He may be the most high profile character I've played, but he's only one among many whose passing I did or do not mourn.

For many of the actors I have written about here, the roles that brought them fame came out of a clear blue, or even a grey and rainy, sky. For some, like Fredric March, it was a passing acquaintance with the world of prosthetic make-up. For others, like Lon Chaney Snr, it was almost a calling. For Boris Karloff, it defined a career which might otherwise have been bound in shallows and miseries.



What I hope I have managed to convey in these pages is something of the universality of the masking tradition, and a longer perspective than the popcorn bucket from which to view cinema monsters and make-up. The human urge to disguise, from palaeolithic caves to the movies, has been a fundamental and magical impulse whose fascination shows no signs of waning.

ing. You can take the word of the Keeper of Ethnography at the British Museum:

'Masks are not merely something exotic which the Third World has... while everyone else does not; nor, in Europe and America, are they only the faded remnant of some passing Arcadian tradition... A children's party... might provide a host of examples of masking using commercially-produced masks impersonating a range of well-known characters and caricatures... At the other end of the social scale, a masked figure who is also a celebrated wrestler, Superbarrio (Superman), popularly appears in the poorer parts of Mexico City to drive away bailiffs...'¹ You can dress it up in the language of psychology: 'All transformations are invested with something at once of profound mystery and of the shameful, since anything that is so modified as to become 'something else' while still remaining the thing that it was, must inevitably be productive of ambiguity and equivocation. Therefore, metamorphoses must be hidden from view — and hence the need for the mask. Secrecy tends towards transfiguration: it helps what-one-is to become what-one-would-like-to-be; and this is what constitutes its magical character, present in both the Greek theatrical mask and in the religious masks of Africa or Oceania. The mask is equivalent to a chrysalis.'²

Or the less high-flown language of a film magazine from more than sixty years ago:

'These 'monster' parts, when backed by the plot, the right settings and skilful direction, seem almost invariably to have met with popular success. But obviously to secure these effects is something far more than a trick. It is an art, and true art is something that cannot be mechanically copied. The taste for the weird and uncanny is perennial in the human soul.'³

For actors, of course, this is not some obscure, religious calling. It's steps in a career, a way of paying the bills, a job. Lon Chaney Snr was characteristically deflective and hard-nosed:

'People seem to have the impression I study scripts all the time. I don't. I don't even try to find stories for myself like some stars. I wouldn't know where to look for them and I probably would not recognize them if I found them... The chief thing for any actor to remember is that it wasn't his brains that got him to stardom. It was only his acting.'⁴ On the question of typecasting, Boris Karloff was adamant: 'They tell me I'm typecast. Well, I've been fortunate. Actors are extremely lucky to be typecast, like any tradesman who is known for specialisation. It is a trademark, a means by which the public recognises you.'⁵

And I'll let my friend and colleague, Robert Englund, speak on both our behalves:

'It's hard to communicate this to people, isn't it? People who say: "Well, Doug, don't you feel terrible now that for the rest of your life they're always going to say, 'Doug Bradley, star of this and that, superb actor, but also known as Pinhead?'" You know, I really don't mind having that following me around: Robert Englund, aka Freddy Krueger. Christ, there are worse monkeys to have on your back than that. I think they think we're in misery doing this, and we're not. Dare we say it? We're having fun!'⁶

What is certain is that there is no final full-stop in this story. Many more monstrous delights lie in store for us, and I, for one, look forward to finding out who will be the new men and women behind the ever-changing mask.